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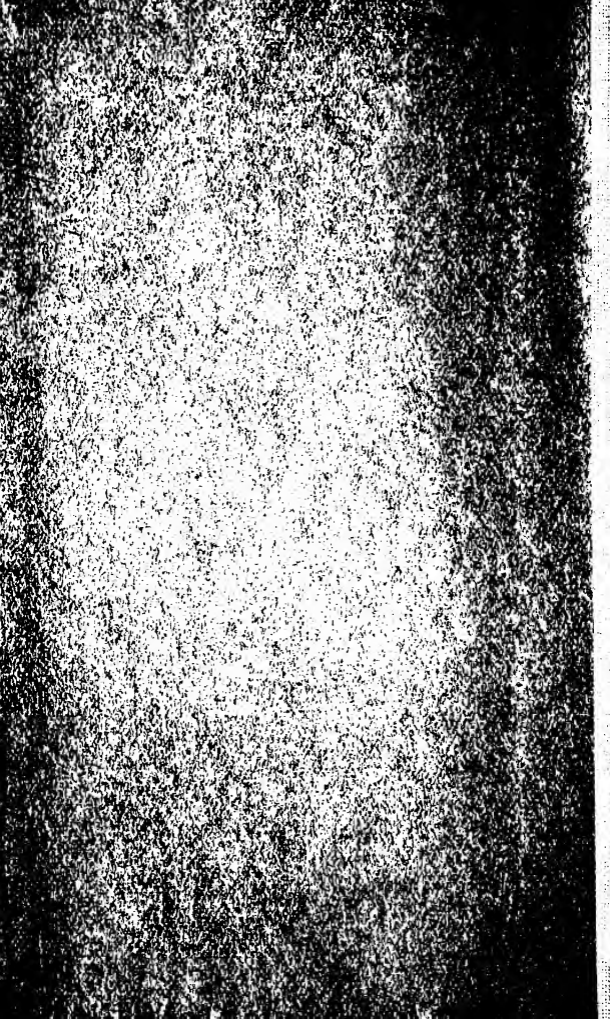
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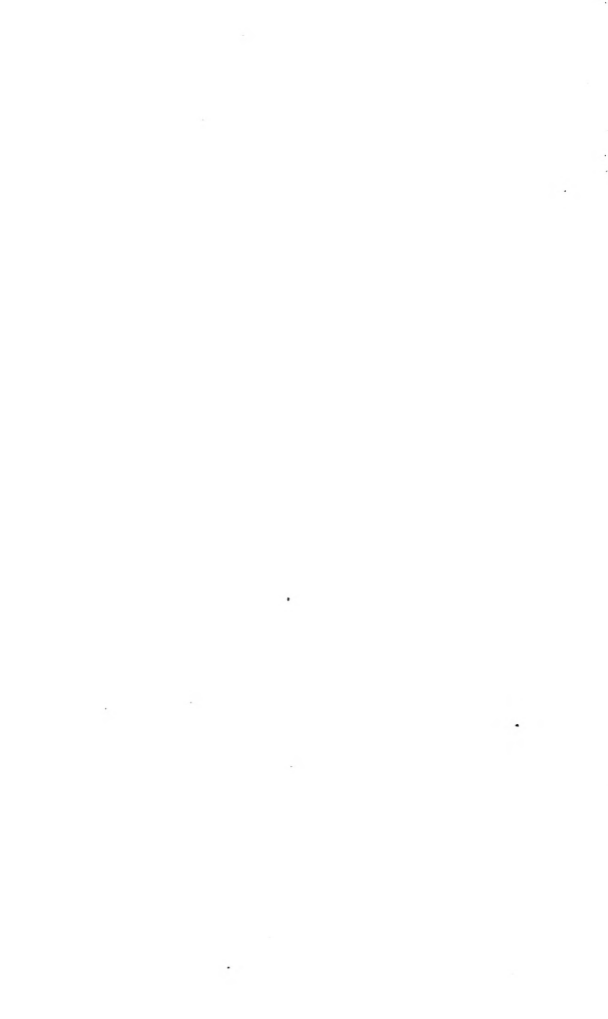


ANNEX

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Gardner





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THE

USEFUL DISCIPLE;

OR,

A NARRATIVE OF MRS. MARY GARDNER.

BY

MRS. PHEBE PALMER,

AUTHOR OF THE "WAY OF HOLINESS," "PRESENT TO MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND,"
"FAITH AND ITS EFFECTS," "RECOLLECTIONS," ETC.

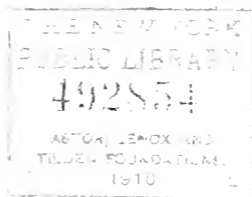
Glorify ye the Lord in the fires.—ISAIAH XXIV, 15.

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TO

MRS. LYDIA N. BAILY,

THE

FRIEND OF THE AFFLICTED,

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

P R E F A C E.

THE facts contained in this narrative were sketched, as taken from the lips of Mrs. Gardner, by Mrs. Lydia A. Baily, of Clinton, N. J. Mrs. B., after having heard the repeated recitals of her afflicted friend, found them so replete with instruction, that her heart was drawn to commit to paper such portions as she had found peculiarly edifying. At the solicitation of Mrs. B., the writer has been induced to undertake the editorship of these papers, and she now submits them to the public in prayerful expectation that the blessing of the God of all grace may rest upon the humble endeavor to promote his glory.

In an emphatic sense, the high and holy One seems to have said to this disciple, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." "Who hath sinned, this man or his parents?" may not be an inquiry as readily prompted at the present as in former days; yet with many the impression obtains, that those who are exercised with unusual affliction may have been, in some inexplicable way, more than ordinarily deficient; and thus well-meaning people have made the afflictions of their friends yet more painful. The case of Job furnishes an illustration. Had his pious friends known that the specific reason why God permitted Satan to try him was because he was a *perfect* man, what veneration and God-like compassion

would have inspired their hearts and lips in their addresses to him! The meaning of Job's afflictions was not to be understood either by himself or his friends. Invisible agencies were at work, and it was, at the time, wholly in reference to these that the conflict was maintained.

Not only was the subject of this narrative chosen of God in the furnace of affliction, but so truly was her will subjected—through the power of grace—to the Divine will, that instances in her history might be brought to prove that she voluntarily chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. It may not be improper to state one which her modesty has withheld from her narrative.

Some time after her much-loved husband and interesting children had been borne from her embraces by death, a gentleman of handsome fortune, and possessed also of many estimable qualities, offered her his hand in marriage. Mrs. G., among her few surviving relatives, had one from whom, on account of his wealth and influence, she had some expectations, in case she should need pecuniary aid in her lonely situation. To the importunities of her suitor were added those of this relative to induce her to accept the offer. But the proposal was steadfastly rejected. The gentleman was not a professor of religion, and Mrs. G. had, in everlasting covenant, devoted herself, soul, body, and spirit, to the service of her Redeemer. She could not consent to unite her interests with one who had not united himself to Christ. This refusal brought upon her the signal displeasure of her

wealthy relative, which eventuated in an unchangeable protest on his part that she should never, under any circumstances, receive aid from him. She was now told to look to those friends and advisers with whom she had so resolutely preferred to identify her interests. These friends were the humble followers of the Savior. Thus did she exhibit before God, men, and angels, that she chose to suffer affliction with the people of God.

As we trace her eventful life, and behold her passing onward from one scene of labor to another, often driven by successive afflictive dispensations, which in rapid course succeeded each other, and witness her unquenched zeal, and her unyielding faith, who will not ejaculate, "Glory to God in the highest!" for such an exhibition of the power of grace to sustain? In every allotment of her heavenly Father, however varied, how evidently does the ruling passion of her heart preponderate! Witness her intense love to God, manifested in her burning zeal to be useful to those around her! Truly did she "glorify the Lord in the fires." Driven by circumstances of ill health from one place to another, these were only made occasions to spread the savor of pure and undefiled religion, by leading the untaught mind to fountains of knowledge and salvation. To the afflicted, then, this volume is specially dedicated.

And it is devoutly anticipated that these pages may be helpful toward inspiring minds which, from various disabilities, have, seemingly in fruitless endeavor, been grasping after opportunities for usefulness, to bring their energies to bear upon such as

may be within reach of the present moment. Most afflictive circumstances, as in the case of Mrs. Gardner, have furnished opportunity to reach minds not otherwise accessible; yet to those who fully trust the keeping of their soul to a faithful Creator, every event should be regarded as a link in the golden chain leading them forth in a *right* way to a city of habitation.

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THE USEFUL DISCIPLE;

OR,

A NARRATIVE OF MRS. MARY GARDNER.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage—Pious grandmother—Convictions through the instrumentality of a little girl—Joy on receiving a New Testament—Scene in the orchard—Mother's death—Change of residence—Gracious effect of a sermon—A pious neighbor—An arbor consecrated to devotion—Sad consequences of a falsehood.

At the period of my birth, December 10, 1796, my father, Mr. Moses C. Crilley, was a resident at Connecticut Farms, N. J. Through the blessing of the Giver of every good gift, he had accumulated a sufficient amount of this world's goods to enable him to live comfortably, and also to bestow the advantages of education upon his children. My parents were neither of them favorably disposed toward the Christian religion, and consequently lived in utter neglect of the salvation of their own souls and that of their children. But my

dear grandmother, who lived in my father's family, was a devoted Christian, and *she* early strove to direct my infant feet in the ways of righteousness. When about five years old I was sent to school, where, from a little girl near my own age, I received additional light in reference to the character of God and his requirements, and my *own* state, as a guilty, lost, and miserable sinner. One day, as myself and little companion were at play, she said to me, "Mary, mamma says we must love God." But a little previous to this my brother had died, and when I was lifted up to look in the coffin I screamed with great terror; and thinking that God had put him there, I conceived the idea that he was a *dreadful* God, and one *only to be feared*. Consequently, on being told that I must *love* God, I was greatly surprised, and replied, "I am *afraid* of God: I *can't* love him!" But my young friend still persisted in saying that we *must* love him, and that we were naughty children, and must try to be good.

What was said at that time made a lasting impression on my mind. I began to feel myself a sinner, and earnestly desired to know what God would have me do. I had heard

that the Bible was the word of God, and inferred that if I had one of my own it would help me to be good. I therefore endeavored to persuade my mother to buy me a Testament. In reply to my earnest entreaties, she would often say, "My child, what can *you* do with a Testament? You are not able to read. What *good* can it do you?" To questionings like these I invariably answered, "O, I will carry it in my arms, close to my heart. *Do*, dear mother, buy me one." At length I succeeded in obtaining my request, and received the much wished-for book in my arms. I now thought my happiness complete. At every favorable opportunity I would request my mother to read to me out of it. One night, being quite unwell, my mother prepared some medicine for me, but could prevail upon me to take it only by saying that she would read for me in my little Testament. During the remainder of my illness she had only to make this promise in order to secure my cheerful acquiescence in her wishes.

As I advanced toward my seventh year, my condemnation for sin daily increased. I was accustomed often to repair to a group of cherry-trees, which was the most retired spot in the

garden, and there sit, and bitterly weep, because I wanted to be good. One day I was sent by my grandmother to gather some pears from an orchard near the house. As I was walking slowly along, I thought I heard a voice calling to me and saying, "Mary, be good!" I was startled, and looked around, thinking it was my father; but soon recollected that he was a long distance from home. I then climbed the fence; but could see no person near. I concluded that it was God who had called me, and without waiting to get my pears, I hastened back to the house. My grandmother, on seeing my basket empty, asked why I had brought no pears. "O, grandmother," said I, "I did not go near the tree; for on the way God called me, and I came in." My grandmother was deeply moved, and told me that God had, indeed, called me to be good, and that I ought to give him my heart.

A few months subsequent to this the relentless hand of death bore away from the bosom of her family my beloved mother. At the age of eight years I went to reside in the family of my aunt B. Soon after going to her house, a man of God, of the Baptist per-

suasion, came to see us, and, in compliance with a request made by my aunt, preached at her house. His remarks were founded on the text, "Come and see the man that told me all things that ever I did." My attention was arrested; and while listening to his words I was deeply convicted of my exceeding sinfulness. I felt that God knew all my past naughty ways, and all my sinful thoughts, and I well knew, that if he was "angry with the wicked every day," surely he must be angry with me. I now became deeply troubled before God, on account of my sins. My aunt was not pious, and could give me no counsel adapted to my wants. I therefore sought the acquaintance of a godly woman, who lived near us. She kindly received me, and, seeing my tears, spoke encouragingly to me. She then told me to ask my aunt to attend a prayer meeting to be held at her house on the following evening, and bring me with her. To this my aunt readily consented, and the next evening I was permitted to attend the meeting. While there my burden of soul was so great as to cause me to weep incessantly. This attracted the attention of all present; and my aunt, by forbidding looks,

endeavored to stop my tears. But it was all in vain: I could not repress my sorrow, or restrain my weeping.

About this time a little book was put into my hands, containing a story about a man who had devoted himself to God, and was accustomed daily to seclude himself in a cluster of bushes for prayer. I thought I would like to do the same. At that time the weather was too cold; but the first warm day that appeared, having obtained permission to walk in the garden, I directed my steps toward a cluster of wild shrubbery, which I had observed from my window, to see if it would be a suitable place for prayer. When I came to the spot I found it lined with wild roses, and an opening just large enough for me to enter. I was delighted with the place, and immediately kneeled down and fervently prayed that God would there manifest his presence to my waiting soul. The petition had no sooner escaped my lips than I felt his heavenly benediction resting upon me. My tears began to flow. I took the corner of my apron to wipe them away; but they would still come. After remaining as long as prudence would dictate, I returned to the house. I made a great

effort to conceal my feelings from my aunt and cousin. I took a book, for the purpose of learning my lesson; but the tears still ran in quick succession down my cheeks. My cousin inquired the cause. In reply, I said, "I am happy in the Lord!" They then laughed at me in such a manner as made me feel quite ashamed, and ever after prevented my disclosing to them the exercises of my mind. But I continued to enjoy great peace of mind for many months.

One day, during the succeeding autumn, I went to visit my cousins, who lived near us. Their father was a very upright man, but severe with his children. While we were playing, his son, a boy twelve years old, did something which he knew would greatly displease his father, and for which he expected a severe chastisement if it was known. He strictly charged his sister to say nothing about it, and turning to me he said, "Now, Mary, if you *tell*, father will beat me to death." Knowing that my friends would rely with implicit confidence upon whatever assertion I might make respecting it, I was, at first, unwilling to promise not to tell; but when I thought of the suffering I should occasion by

telling the truth, my sympathy overcame my sense of right, and I sacredly promised not to reveal it. When, therefore, I was afterward questioned about it, I professed to be entirely ignorant of the matter. This was fatal to my peace. I felt that I had offended God by telling a lie. At times I was almost persuaded to go and confess my fault; but the thought that others would have to suffer for it would deter me. I knew not what to do. A sore conflict with the powers of darkness ensued, and I soon gave up my confidence in God, and lost all my happiness. I lived with my aunt till I was nearly eleven years of age. During the latter part of the time she became a sincere Christian, and endeavored to lead me in the strait and narrow way. But her counsel was little heeded. I had wandered from the good Shepherd, and I now *loved* to wander. I rolled sin, as a sweet morsel, under my tongue. In *one* point I had *voluntarily* yielded to the arch deceiver, and his shouts of victory were now resounding through every avenue of my soul.

CHAPTER II.

Her father's second marriage—Convictions renewed—A disappointment—An infidel neighbor—Obedience to her father—Reply to Mr. Wade's objections to Christianity—Attendance on Church—Prohibition of religious associations—The school-house—Deep distress—Religious joy.

IN the year 1808, my father having married again, I returned to my home at Connecticut Farms. The Presbyterian church was near my father's house, and I attended regularly. I remained in much the same state of mind till I was fourteen years of age. At this time there was a revival of religion in the Church, and several of my schoolmates were led earnestly to inquire what they should do to be saved. All my former convictions now returned, and my tears began again to flow. My dear grandmother, who was my counselor and guide, often took me to Church with her. One evening, as we were about starting for Church, my father stopped me, and said, "Mary, I do not wish you to go to Church to-night." I was greatly surprised, but felt that I must obey. I returned to my room much disappointed. I afterward heard my grandmother talking with my father as to the

propriety of my going. She soon called me to go with her, but knowing that I should not have the entire approbation of my father, I would not consent to do so. After taking off my things, I took my Bible, went down stairs, and seated myself in one corner of the room to read. While sitting there an old friend and neighbor of my father's came in. He was an infidel, and, of course, had no respect for religion. As soon as he saw me he said:

“How is it, Mary, that you are not at meeting to-night? My girls told me you were going to get religion.”

I was greatly embarrassed at being thus addressed, but replied that my father had desired me not to go, and as I had never before disobeyed him, I did not like to do it now, though it had cost me a great struggle to submit.

“How is that,” said he, turning to my father; “is that true?”

“Yes,” said my father, “she has never in her life disobeyed me.”

“Well,” said Mr. Wade, “that is more than I can say for my children. They are all off to Church to-night without my sanction. But what is that you have in your hand? A *Bible*,

I see. What *good* will *that* do you? Do you suppose that it is true?"

"Mr. Wade," said I, "do you think good men or bad men wrote the Bible?"

"Why, *bad* men, to be *sure*."

"Do you think, Mr. Wade, that bad men would put their lives in jeopardy, and suffer every privation and distress, for that which they knew was not true, just for the sake of inculcating false doctrines?"

He could not answer me, but my father turned around, and said rather sharply, "Do you pretend to teach those who are so much older than you?" In a few minutes they both left the room. My father, however, soon returned, and having seated himself near me, said,

"Mary, I have noticed, for some time past, that you have been very unhappy. Your tears are falling constantly. This religion is making you too gloomy. Besides, if you keep on in this way you will soon be crazy."

I scarcely knew what to say, but spoke of my grandmother and several other Christians, who were always happy. But this did not seem to affect him; and as I sat with my Bible still in my lap, he said, "Is there no *other*

book but that for you to read? You must lay it aside: it makes you unhappy." I ventured to ask him if I might go to meeting the next night, to which he promptly answered, "No: neither shall you visit any of your religious relatives or friends." I now thought it was all over with me, and that I would be lost forever. Even my dear grandmother was forbidden to speak to me on the subject of the greatest possible interest. The next evening there was to be an inquiry meeting at the school-house, for serious persons. This room was situated at the corner of my father's orchard. When it was near time for the meeting I stationed myself at the window, where I could see my companions coming over the hills in every direction to the school-house. O, how I envied them, and longed to be with them, and have some words of encouragement spoken to *me!* But I was deprived of that comfort. My heart sank within me, as I looked upon myself as an outcast, forsaken of God and man. With these feelings I rushed into the garden, threw myself upon the ground, and wept and prayed. I arose, but felt no better. I walked on till I reached the barn. "Here," I thought, "I will try the Spirit

once more." I again kneeled: I prayed, I groaned, I besought God. But all within was darkness and gloom. I arose and walked toward an apple-tree. Here I kneeled and prayed the third time. I then passed on, unconscious where I was going, till I found myself almost under the windows of the school-house. I paused and listened to what was said. The minister was encouraging the seekers to go on, and strive to enter into the strait gate. He repeated from Scripture these words, "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." As they fell upon my ears all was hushed and calm within. The Lord, in his great love, had bidden the tempest cease. I looked up; the moon was shining brightly; every thing looked peaceful and happy. I then returned; I visited the different places where I had prayed, and in each of them prostrated myself before God, and praised him for his goodness and mercy toward me. I commenced singing,

"O, when shall I see Jesus,
And reign with him above,
And from that flowing fountain
Drink everlasting love?"

Thus, when cut off from all outward means of grace, I discovered how easy it was for

Him who had spoken worlds from naught to say, "Daughter, be of good cheer: thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." In the day that I sought him with all my heart he proved himself a God not afar off—a very present help in time of trouble.

CHAPTER III.

Subject of surprise and inquiry—Errs in not confessing the source of her joy—Mr. W.'s expedients in urging infidelity upon her—His success—Severe illness—Deceptive hopes—Self-sacrificing attentions to a poor woman—Perplexing dilemma—Calls upon God—Several remarkable answers to prayer—Renounces infidelity.

As I returned to the house my father, observing a great change in my countenance, looked at me with great surprise. The next evening Mr. Wade came in, and, seeing me look so cheerful, said, "What, Poll, have you got religion?" I was not a little surprised at the question, as I had not yet determined what state of mind I *was* in. I therefore said, "No, sir, I have not." This answer afterward troubled me much, as I thought I might have done wrong in thus replying. Mr. Wade, however, seemed still suspicious that I had

some secret cause for joy in my heart, occasioned by religion, which I was unwilling to confess; and he was evidently intent upon its extermination. He now renewed his efforts to efface every good impression from my heart. Together with other infidel publications, he gave me to read, "The Principles of Nature." In the following spring he brought me "Thomas Paine's Explanation of the New Testament." The books given me during the winter I had read with disgust; but in this I was attacked on my weakest side. I was a great lover of nature. Cold winter had just passed away; the little birds had returned from their temporary exile, to gladden my heart with the sweet harmony of their blended notes. Here and there the little lambs were seen skipping over the hills; the pensive murmurs of the streams were heard all around me; and the flowers were reviving from their winter's sleep. All nature, indeed, seemed, in a peculiar manner, to proclaim the wonder-working power of the Deity. The book alluded to spoke particularly of scenes like this, and its author asserted that, in creation God had revealed all that it was necessary for man to know.

This proved an ample inlet to temptation. The subtle reasonings of the adversary were, that God never gives any thing unnecessarily; and if he had not given the Bible, it must be untrue; and if untrue, there could be no Christ, no heaven, no hell. Truly, Satan desired to have me, that he might sift me as wheat.

I now had to contend with the powers of darkness. Strange thoughts would flit across my mind. Innumerable questionings, relative to every-day occurrences, occupied my thoughts. I was constantly making vain inquiries as to the location of hell, heaven, and other non-essential points. I was frequently warned against suffering my mind to dwell upon such subjects; but I generally answered that it was out of my power to avoid it. I longed to find some one who could explain these things to me.

At this time I read "Bacon's Heathen Philosophy," and was then led to forsake my Bible, and concluded there was nothing in religion. The adversary now triumphed for a season. Thus, after my departure from the true way, I was led on from one error to another, till it might have been justly said of

me, "She is taken captive by Satan at his will." But rejoice not against me, O, mine enemy, for when I fall I shall rise again.

During this time of gross darkness, I still felt that there was a God who heard and answered prayer; and whatever I needed of a temporal nature I was accustomed to pray for, with the utmost confidence that I should receive it.

I was now visited with a severe illness. I was perfectly calm, and felt willing to die. But, O, how fallacious my hopes! If God, in his righteous anger, had then taken me away, how bitter would have been my disappointment! Praise be given to his excellent name, for having spared me, that I might recover my strength, and the pardon of my multiplied transgressions, before I should go hence to be here no more. Well may I call upon my soul, and all that is within me, to bless His holy name.

I had now entered upon my eighteenth year. Soon after recovering from my illness, a poor woman, an acquaintance of mine, was taken sick with typhus fever. Her cottage was two miles from our house. She had small children, an unkind husband, and no

one to take care of her. I therefore offered my assistance, which was gladly accepted. I was with her during her illness, and took care of her day and night. During her convalescence, she one day expressed a strong desire to have some biscuit and honey. I immediately made known her request to her husband, but he would do nothing about it. There was no flour in the house, and I could not leave her to get any. In my perplexity I went to her bedside and said:

“Mrs. M., I do not know what we shall do: there seems to be no way for you to get what you want. All we can do is, to ask God for it. Now, *I* intend to ask him. If there is a God, if the Bible be true, if there *is* a Savior to redeem, I will prove and know it. Did not the children of Israel, in old times, ask bread of God? and did not he rain down manna from heaven upon them? Now, *I* shall go and ask God for biscuit and honey.”

Mrs. M., knowing that I was not a Christian, said, “Mary I do not like to hear you speak in that way.” She thought I was tempting God.

But the great Searcher of hearts only knew how sincerely I desired to know the right

way. I had no sooner made her comfortable than I ran up stairs, fell upon my knees, and besought God to make himself known to me by giving this poor woman what she so much needed. After presenting my petition I returned to Mrs. M., with a full conviction that my prayer would be answered. I had now put the Bible to the test, and was waiting to see the result.

In the afternoon two neighbors called to see Mrs. M. I observed that each had a covered plate in her hand. After a little conversation one of them said that she had been baking during the morning, and thought that perhaps Mrs. M. might relish some biscuit, and she had therefore brought her some. The other then remarked that she had brought her some honey, thinking it might be good for her sore mouth.

I was *alarmed* as well as astonished—*God* was so suddenly brought before my mind. I took the plates, one in each hand, walked into Mrs. M.'s room, and exclaimed, "See how God has answered our prayers!" She, too, was surprised, and affected even to tears. This circumstance put all my infidel notions to flight.

A few days after this Mrs. M. thought she could relish a small, delicate-fleshed bird, called the snipe. I requested her husband to shoot one for her, but he was not willing. I therefore went again to the throne of grace, to make my request known to God, and it was again answered. The next morning, while I was combing Mrs. M.'s hair, puss came and laid a snipe at her feet. On picking it up I said, "Here, Mrs. M., is your snipe. Elijah was fed by the ravens: your *cat* is permitted to bring this to you." I then prepared it for eating, and she was greatly refreshed by it.

At another time she desired a rabbit. I made a snare, such as I had seen my brothers make, and told the little boy to take it to the woods and set it. I went to the Lord again, and prayed that he would send us a rabbit. The next morning I sent the little boy for the trap, but, to my great disappointment, there was no rabbit. My confidence began to waver. It was not long, however, before we heard puss making a great noise at the door. The little girl endeavored to open it, but she could not; I therefore opened it myself, and there found puss trying to get up the stone steps with a large rabbit in her mouth. I picked it up

with delight, ran in to Mrs. M., and said, "We have been dictating to God. This is the reason of our disappointment. But here, you see, he has sent it in his own way." I have ever since that time been able to say, "The Lord, he is God," and have never, for one moment, doubted the truth of the Scriptures.

How condescending had my heavenly Father been! Well *might* Israel now say, "There is no God like unto our God!"

CHAPTER IV.

Great remorse—Mistaken views and rebellious thoughts—Her marriage—Her husband's and her own religious predilections—Birth of her child, and views of her responsibility in relation to training it—Long-continued distress of mind—Joys of salvation restored, under the prayer of her pastor—Informs her friends—Effect on her father.

WHEN I became convinced that the Bible was true, great remorse took possession of my breast. I felt justly condemned. Having been taught the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, I concluded that I was one of the reprobates—one destined to be forever banished from the presence of the Lord. As a result, my heart rose in rebellion against God and his ways. I accounted him

my enemy. I walked in much anguish of spirit, and great darkness. Two paths seemed to be presented before me—the one election, and the other infidelity. Either, I felt, was death to me. I was so deeply impressed with my great sinfulness, that I did not think it possible for me to be one of the elect.

I remained in this deplorable state of mind till the year 1821, when I was united in marriage to Aaron Gardner. He was a very respectable and amiable young man, and my parents were much pleased with him. I had always thought that when I was married I should certainly serve the Lord. As the time drew near, and especially the week previous to my marriage, my convictions of sin greatly increased, and I was frequently on my knees, praying that God would enable me to keep my vow with him. My husband had been brought up in nearly the same manner as myself, with this exception: he had attended the Methodist and I the Presbyterian Church. He advocated free salvation, and I unconditional election. He tried to encourage me to lay hold of God by faith, believing that all might come to God and be saved. At times I was much comforted by his remarks.

Thus I went on, sinning and repenting, hoping and fearing, till my daughter Jane was laid in my arms. I now thought my happiness complete. But it was not long before the still, small voice of conscience began to speak again, saying, "This child must be brought up for God!" But how could I teach my child what I did not know by experience myself? I felt that there must be an entire giving up of my own heart and will to God, before I could lead another. I felt a strong desire to know God, and please him; but then the doctrine of election would come up before my mind, in such a manner as to lead me to despair of success with God. This made me very unhappy. One day, while reflecting upon my state of mind, I came to the conclusion that it was of no use for me to be unhappy in time as well as in eternity. As to the latter, it appeared to me that my fate was fixed, and I concluded to make the most of my present enjoyments. This device of the devil induced me to renounce all efforts to seek the favor of God, and dismiss from my mind all thoughts of the subject. I now gave up prayer, and ceased to read the Bible.

When my babe was about six months old,

my pastor, Rev. Mr. Thompson, called upon me. He made several inquiries respecting the state of my mind before God. I told him that I desired religion above every thing else, but that I could not come to God, unless I was called according to his purpose; and that all my efforts to do so had proved fruitless. I assured him that I had given up all hope that I should ever be saved; that I considered my prayers an abomination in his sight; and if God should be pleased to send me to hell, I could praise him for it, because I deemed myself unworthy of eternal life. He said but little in reply, but, as he was going away, took me by the hand and said, "Mrs. Gardner, I trust the day is not far distant when you will be born into the kingdom." My heart still continued heavy. Three months after this, as I one day sat rocking and singing to my babe, my attention was particularly drawn toward her. She was a very lovely child—a fact admitted by all who saw her—and had many winning ways. While gazing with delight upon her beauty, I felt a strong desire to train her up for God. Then came my distress again. "How," I asked, "can I, a sinner, train this child for heaven? She has even now a depraved

nature, and, I fear, is drinking from me the seeds of eternal death. Miserable mother!" I exclaimed, "what shall I do to save this dear child from my fate? I must give her to some devoted Christian, that she may not feel my contaminating influence." As these thoughts were passing through my mind, I arose and laid my sweet child on the bed, and then fell on my knees, calling upon God to have mercy upon me, its unhappy mother. I was then led by the Spirit to plead with God in a very powerful manner. My heart-felt language was, "If I perish, I will perish at thy feet. Whether happy or miserable, the remainder of my life shall be devoted to thee." I now began to feel that there was a *little* hope for me. As I rose from my knees, I remembered a tract in which I had read an account of a man who had experienced religion, as the result of reading the New Testament through by course. I thought this would be the best thing I could do. I therefore took my long-neglected Testament, and had read as far as Christ's sermon on the mount, when my husband came in. I told him of my determination. He was much rejoiced, as I could instantly and clearly understand, and without

making any remarks, strange as it may seem, he commenced repeating the lines,

“Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve.”

I requested him not to mention to my parents or friends my new purposes; but I was resolved to go on. My burden still increased; during the four succeeding weeks the anguish of my mind was such as I can not describe. I could neither eat nor sleep; I felt that the help of man was, indeed, vain.

One afternoon, as I was sewing and reflecting on my miserable state, I heard a rap at the door. I found, on opening it, that it was Mrs. Thompson, the minister's wife. I at once resolved not to disclose to her the state of my mind. As soon as she entered, my little child lisped her name, and tried to say, “How do you do?” She ran to her, took her upon her lap, and kissing her, said, “What a lovely child!” “Yes,” I replied, “but what an unworthy mother!” Thus, before I was aware, I had revealed the deep workings of my heart. I burst into tears, and asked her if *she* would take my child, and bring it up for God. I solicited her to spend the remainder of the afternoon with me, which she consented to do.

She told me that I ought to be very thankful for such views of my responsibility as I had. I did not understand how I ought to be *thankful* for feelings which I thought were killing my soul and body. My burden now became heavier than ever before, and she left me in tears.

The next evening Mr. Thompson came in, and endeavored to explain to me the way of salvation. I told him that I did not think God could be just and pardon me; that I could admire his justice, though it did prove my eternal condemnation. He pointed me to the Lamb of God, and prayed earnestly in my behalf. During his prayer I was enabled to look to Christ by faith. O, what a view! I saw that he was *my* Savior from sin. For *me* he had suffered and died. Now he appeared to me altogether lovely. I felt that he was just such a Savior as could “do helpless sinners good.” O, what light and joy now filled my soul, and ravished my heart! I was surprised at the nearness of access which I found at the throne of grace. When we rose from our knees I felt that my burden was gone; but did not mention it to Mr. Thompson. After he left me I took my Testament and continued

reading in course. When I came to the eighteenth and nineteenth verses of the fifth chapter of Mark, I was entirely overcome. It read thus: "And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him, that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but said unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." I felt that it had been spoken directly to me, and broke out in singing,

"I love my Jesus, yes, I do;
O! glory, halleluiah!
I know my Jesus loves me too;
O! glory, halleluiah."

My husband had gone to New York, and my sister came to stay with me that night. I could not sleep, nor let her, my heart was so filled with love and praise to God. How great my deliverance! I sang with a loud voice many times during the night. Early in the morning myself and sister prepared to go to my father's house, where I was to stay till my husband should return. My sister was greatly tried with me for making so much noise. "The next we know," said she, "you will be crazy." She then took my babe and ran on

ahead of me, as fast as ever she could. She was ashamed of me, because I had continued to sing after I had passed the gate. I wanted to stop at Mr. Thompson's and tell him how great things God had done for me; but as it was early, and no one stirring, I passed on, and in a few minutes was at my father's house. On meeting my step-mother at the door, I exclaimed, "O, mother! I have got religion!" She threw her arms around me, and rejoiced with me. Presently my dear grandmother coming in, said, "Well, I can, with angels, rejoice over this lost one found." My father also looked at my happy countenance with much surprise, and then sat down, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears. From that time till his death he was never known to say any thing against religion.

CHAPTER V.

Husband's advice—Daily rules—Self-denial—Searching inquiry—Husband's sudden illness—His patience and resignation—His death—Poignant, tearless sorrow—Divine support—Feelings on returning to her father's house to reside—Visits her husband's grave—Effect of sorrow on her health—Luxury of tears—A night on her husband's grave—Comforted in God—Child's illness—Its restoration.

THE next day my dear husband came home. When apprised of the joyful news, he said nothing, but took me by the hand, and led me out of the room. He then solicited me to give him the account from my own lips. After I had done so, he said, "Now, Mary, don't give up, and injure the cause of religion, as thousands have done." This was a solemn admonition, and I deeply felt its weight. I prayed much to God that he would prevent me from bringing a reproach upon the cause. On the evening of the next day the Rev. Mr. Thompson called, with a pious friend, to see me. I related to him the circumstances attending my conversion, the joys I then had, and my fears lest I should lose this precious blessing. Mr. Thompson remarked, that there was no danger of that, as none could pluck the Christian

out of the Father's hand. But I had before learned, from sad experience, that I was very liable to fall into temptation, and that our Savior's admonition to "watch and pray," was not a needless one. In order to keep myself in a spiritual frame of mind, I made the following rules:

1. On awaking in the morning, to give thanks to God for my preservation through the night.

2. To pray over every garment that I put on, that with it I might put on holiness.

3. When washing myself, to ask the Savior to cleanse me from all unrighteousness in his own precious blood.

4. In domestic duties, to ask God's blessing upon all that I did.

The precious Bible now became my chief source of joy. I began to feel the importance of denying myself daily. I soon discovered, upon examination, that my table was likely to become a snare. I knew that I was too fond of "pleasant food;" I therefore resolved to deny myself, continually, of whatever dish I loved best, till I was sure I had gained the victory over this propensity. My joys now greatly increased, and most emphatically could

I say, in the language of that sweet poet,
Charles Wesley,

“Not a cloud doth arise to darken my skies,
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes.”

It now seemed to me that the Savior—as if pointing to my husband and child—was saying, “Lovest thou me more than these?” They were, indeed, exceedingly dear to me; but I was enabled, through grace, to lay even these treasures at his blessed feet, saying, “Thou who knowest *all* things, knowest that I love thee.” The sacrifice was accepted, and infinite and eternal Wisdom responded, “I have refined thee; but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”

Early one morning my husband awoke me, saying, “Mary, I am very sick.” I immediately arose, and went to prepare something for him to take. He soon arose and came into the kitchen where I was, and again repeated, “I am a very sick man,” adding, “I shall never recover.” I helped him back to his bed, and then ran to my father’s house, to apprise them of his illness. They were greatly alarmed, and seemed impressed that it would end in death.

My father immediately went for a physician,

and I returned to my poor, sick husband. The doctor soon came, but said little. I said, "Do you not think, doctor, that his strong constitution is in his favor?" "That," said he, "has not been proved." This reply went like a dagger to my heart. All hope seemed to be taken away. His fever proved to be of the most malignant kind. During his illness, which lasted less than six days, he manifested great resignation and patience. I did not leave his room, after he was taken sick, till the day previous to his death. He then requested me to take some rest. I consented, and lay down for a few hours in an adjoining room. On returning to him at four o'clock in the morning, he inquired whether I had rested myself, and then said, "This is my last night on earth." At one o'clock the next day there was a change in his countenance, and at four o'clock, P. M., he sweetly breathed his last, committing his wife and dear child into the hands of his heavenly Father, at the same time requesting my earthly parent to take me to his house. During his illness my tears had not ceased to flow; but when he was gone the fountain was dried up, and the burden at my heart seemed almost insupportable. "Then I

am a widow," said I. "A widow!" O, how desolate did it sound! I could not wish my dear husband back from his glorious home; but the thought of my desolate situation brought such keen anguish, that nothing but God's almighty power could have sustained me.

From my husband's grave I was taken to my father's house, which was to be my future residence. As I entered, such a feeling of loneliness came over me as I can never describe. For a long time I was accustomed daily to take my little girl by the hand, and visit her father's grave. But this proving deleterious to my health, I was obliged to discontinue the practice. Sleep had departed from my eyes, and my appetite had quite failed me.

One night, as the moon was shining very brightly, I rose from my bed and walked toward the grave. When I came in sight of it I burst into a flood of tears. O, the luxury of weeping! I sat down upon the grave, greatly relieved and comforted in God. My Redeemer was with me, and my peace was as a river. I soon became so deeply absorbed in contemplation, that the rising sun tinged the grave before I had thought of returning home.

At this time my health was very delicate; and my excess of grief brought on a spasmodic affection, which greatly reduced me. When I had measurably recovered from my sickness, my little Jane was seized with an inflammatory fever of a severe character. I had little expectation of her recovery. I took the Bible and read the account of Jarius' daughter being raised from the dead. It deeply affected me. I besought God, if it was his will, to restore my daughter to health. The Spirit then applied to my heart these words: "Be still, and know that I am God;" "It is I, be not afraid." I felt at this moment to sink into the will of God, and say, "Not my will, but thine be done!" My child soon grew better, and her health was entirely restored.

CHAPTER VI.

An affecting circumstance—Sympathizing physician—Increased responsibilities—Little Jane at prayer—"Don't angels sing?"—Pecuniary difficulties—Loved ones separate—Grandmother's return—Her sudden death—Mrs. Gardner's baptism—Baptism of the Holy Ghost—Her eldest daughter's illness and death.

ON the second day of June, 18—, my daughter Elizabeth was born. This was to me a deeply-affecting circumstance. It brought vividly to mind my beloved husband, and all my past sorrows. When my babe was dressed the doctor took it in his arms, and my little Jane by the hand, and approaching my bedside said, "Mary, my dear child, here are your children." "Yes, doctor," I replied, "but where is their father? He is gone, and *I* am a lonely widow." Here the tears began to flow afresh. He endeavored to comfort me, repeating the words, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." My responsibility was now greatly increased: I had to act a father's as well as a mother's part. The objects of my tender and constant care grew every day more interesting. My little Jane thought much of God, and seemed disposed

to seek his favor. Whenever I kneeled in prayer, she was sure to kneel beside me, and remain till I had finished. One day, having occasion to go to my room, I found her kneeling beside a chair, with her little hands clasped and her lips moving as if in prayer. I was deeply moved; I kneeled beside her. She was not at all disconcerted by my presence. I asked her why she had come there. She said, "Mamma, *you* come here alone to pray, and I want to talk with God too." My heart was filled with love to God, while I listened to her answer, and I said, "Verily, 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise!'"

One day she had been singing, with great earnestness, "Halleluiah." Soon after she came to me and said, "Mamma, don't angels in heaven sing halleluiah to God?" Upon being assured that they did, she said, "Well, I will sing it too."

Early in 1824 difficulties accumulated in our family. My father, in endeavoring to assist a friend, became insolvent, and at last lost all his property. The little that my husband had left for my support went with it. My father had a proud spirit, and he could not bear the

humiliation. His health became impaired, and he soon sank into his grave, leaving us, who had always been accustomed to every comfort, in poverty and deep distress. We were an affectionate family, and had never been separated for any length of time. But the hour for separation had indeed come. My grandmother was now obliged to live with her son; my sister married and left; while my step-mother and myself hired a part of the house we were in and lived together.

In the month of November my grandmother came to see us. As she entered the door she said, "Mary, I have come to live and die with you: I can not be contented away from you." "Well, my dear grandmother," I replied, "if these are your feelings, I will share the last morsel with you. You shall never leave me." She appeared to be in her usual health, and very happy. This was on Tuesday. On Thursday morning, thinking that she had slept longer than usual, I went to awake her; but my efforts were vain. She no longer recognized the loved ones around her, but was just ready to gather up her feet in death, and yield her spirit to God, who gave it. At ten o'clock that evening she died, in the eighty-

fourth year of her age—gathered into the heavenly garner, like a shock of corn fully ripe, in its season.

Two weeks after this event I joined the Presbyterian Church. I did not fully assent to *all* the articles of their belief; but seeing no other way opened for me, I thought it better to cast in my lot with the people of the Lord even if I did not agree with them in every particular. I was baptized with water, and the Holy Ghost descended upon me in a manner that enabled me greatly to rejoice in God my Savior. How *good* was the Lord thus to strengthen me, before he again laid his afflicting hand upon me! I had no sooner reached my home than my little Jane complained of a sore throat. She was very fleshy, and I became apprehensive that she might have the croup. I, however, gave her some medicine, which seemed to relieve her, and she soon appeared quite well again.

The next Sunday morning I heard her, at an early hour, saying, “O, grandmamma, my throat is so sore!” I discovered that she breathed with great difficulty. I ran into the room, and there lay my beloved child panting for breath. Vain would be an attempt to

describe my feelings. The physician was called. As he entered the room he first glanced at me as I sat weeping, and then looking at my beloved one, said, "Mary, my dear child, don't weep; she looks like a little angel." An emetic was promptly administered, and every thing in our power was done to save her. At four o'clock, P. M., I found that the hand of death had snatched the dear one from my fond embrace; but I had the sweet assurance that angels had carried her to rest in Abraham's bosom; and I was enabled triumphantly to exclaim, "It is well with me; it is well with my husband; it is well with the child."

CHAPTER VII.

Funeral sermon—Sympathizing friends—Deep mental anguish—False reasonings—Mr. Thompson's advice—Ardent longings after the Savior—Humiliation, fasting, and prayer—A hymn—Strong consolation—Death of her only remaining child—Happy submission.

THE next day her funeral sermon was preached, from the text found in Ruth i, 20: "Call me not Naomi; call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me."

All my friends mourned and lamented with me; for they dearly loved my child. They endeavored to console me, and expressed much wonder that I should be so afflicted.

From this I was led to dwell much upon my repeated trials. Stroke after stroke had fallen heavily upon me, even when I was striving to serve the Lord with all my powers. It seemed as if he had turned to be my enemy, and was fighting against me. The enemy came in like a flood. I was tempted to murmur at his providences, and think hard thoughts of his holy ways. Thick darkness came upon me, and I could find no comfort. With Job I was constrained to cry, "Wherefore contendest thou with me?" My harp was hung upon the willows; my soul was brought very low.

In the depth of my sorrow I was led to reflect how I had been supported in former trials, and was led to inquire why I did not now receive the same consolation. I concluded that it must be because I had no religion. I was persuaded that I had deceived myself, and deceived the Church. I knew that they thought me a devoted Christian; but I felt that I must undeceive them. I resolved to make a public confession, and withdraw from

that holy circle. With feelings like these I went to my pastor, and told him what had been my exercises of mind, and what my intentions were. "Ah, Mary!" said he, "this is nothing less than a stratagem of the devil to divert you from your onward course. If you yield to his malicious insinuations you will be lost indeed. If you should now leave the Church, it will be a complete triumph to the enemy of souls. You have now come to 'Doubting Castle.' Your present feelings are an evidence of your religion. You are passing the 'Valley of Humiliation.' God has hidden his face from you to try your faith. When the work is done, and you are sufficiently tried, you shall come forth as gold seven times purified." Much more was said to the same purpose. After the conversation was ended he knelt and offered up prayer to God in my behalf. I returned home, but not comforted. I remained in this same disconsolate state for three months. I then began to feel such a longing after my Savior, such a desire for closer communion with him, as I can not describe. My mother was some distance from home, on a visit. I resolved to set apart the week for humiliation, fasting, and prayer. I

commenced on Monday morning, and during the week ate the simplest food I could procure, and as little as possible of that. I went on perseveringly till Saturday morning. Still my Lord did not appear. I then prostrated myself before him, and prayed that the light of his countenance might, at that moment, dawn upon me—that he would be pleased to make known all his righteous will concerning me. I arose, took my hymn-book, and opened to the following hymn:

“I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

’Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that, in some favored hour,
At once he’d answer my request;
And, by his love’s restraining power,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with his own hand he seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my hopes, and laid me low.

‘Lord, why is this?’ I, trembling, cried;
 ‘Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?’
 ‘Tis in this way,’ the Lord replied,
 ‘I answer prayer, for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ,
 From self and pride to set thee free;
 And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
 That thou may’st seek thy all in me.’ ”

These words were applied in a very powerful manner. If heaven had been opened to my natural vision, and I beheld the mighty God upon his dazzling throne, I do not think I could have felt more of his presence than I did when reading these lines. New light broke in upon my mind; I remembered how I had been led; I saw that my kind Father had been chastising me, not for his pleasure, but for my profit, that I might be made partaker of that holiness which I had asked of him. I was enabled, through grace, sweetly to sink into his will. I could say, with all my heart, “Come sickness, sorrow, pain, and death; take husband, children, friends away; but give me Jesus.”

“Yes, let them go; one look from thee
 Will more than make amends
 For all the losses I sustain,
 Of credit, riches, friends.”

I was deeply sensible that, without my Savior’s presence, though surrounded on all

sides by kind friends, and though the luxuries of this life were heaped upon me in superabundance, yet I should feel myself poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked, and destitute of all things; but I knew that, if all things else were taken away, and my Savior left, I could

“Gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain.”

With my heart fixed on God,

“No changes of season or place”

could make any change in my mind—prisons would be converted into palaces by his glorious presence, and my joys be unspeakable and full of glory. I fell upon my knees, and praised my heavenly Father for the great love wherewith he had loved me. My prayer was all praise, and my soul was filled with glory and God.

One short week passed by, and the tomb again unvailed its bosom, to receive another of my treasures to its trust. Death had again crossed our threshold, and borne away my beloved Elizabeth from my arms. When I saw that her eyes were closing in death, I exulted in the mercy of God; I felt to shout the praises of him whose ways were not as my

ways, and whose thoughts were as far above mine as the heavens are above the earth. My language was, "Take her, Savior; she is thine. All I ever received thou gavest me; I return it all to thee, knowing that thou wilt lose nothing of all that I have committed to thee; and when thou shalt appear, surely these shall also appear with thee in glory."

CHAPTER VIII.

The graves of her departed family—Longs to depart and be with Christ—Questioned in relation to living to be useful in the world—Solemn surrender of herself to God—Evidence of Divine acceptance—A professor who had lived in doubt forty years—Triumph of grace over nature—Call on an aged widow—Encouraged by her pastor—Resolves on a life of active piety.

"WELL, Mary," said a friend to me, "you have been heard to say that you lived only for your children; but your heavenly Father intends that you should live only for himself." "Amen: let it be so," I replied. After burying the last of my family, I embraced the earliest opportunity that was presented for visiting the church-yard. To me it appeared a pleasant spot. I thought I should like to lay beside my loved ones, and be absent from

the body, and present with the Lord. I kneeled upon my husband's grave, and prayed that, if it could be consistent with the will of God, I might then depart in peace. My foolish heart inquired, "What more is there for me to do?" I paused. A still, small voice seemed whispering to my heart, "Are you willing that those who visit your grave should say, 'Here lies one who made the world no better by living in it?' Has the Lord no work for you to do?" It was suggested that his design in taking away my family might have been to enable me to labor more efficiently in his vineyard. "Ah, Lord God," said I, "what can *I* do for thy glory? I am a widow, all alone, and very poor. How can I labor for thee?"

I then remembered that I had an education, and might make myself useful by the improvement of this talent. At this point I lifted up my heart to God, and said, "Lord, I am thine, wholly thine. I here make a consecration of my all to thee. Thou only art to be served; thou alone art to be feared. I will henceforth inscribe on all I have, 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD.' Ye angels, that surround the throne, and all ye heavenly hosts, witness my solemn

vow! And ye, my kindred dust, which lie in hillock after hillock at my feet, may your pure spirits even now behold my consecration! And now, O, my God! set to thy seal, that thou art faithful and true. May I *know* that I am accepted of thee; that thou *dost* receive the sacrifice! If it be thy will, give me an evidence of my full salvation." In a moment it seemed to me that heaven had come down to earth. The light was greater than the sun in its full strength. I was overpowered with the glory of God, and filled with his fullness. I had now found what I had been long seeking. I knew it was a Bible doctrine, that we should present our "bodies a living sacrifice;" but I did not know it by the name of sanctification, perfect love, or Christian perfection. I supposed that the Methodist doctrine of Christian perfection was something entirely different from what I had experienced. I felt that all around and within me was holy, so fully did I realize the presence of God.

Soon after this I called upon an aged member of the Church. As I entered, clad in deep mourning, she said, "O, Mary, how lonely you look! How lonely you must feel!" I replied, "O, no; I do not feel lonely. God

has filled up all vacancies by his glorious presence. Grace has overcome the ties of nature. I can now *rejoice* in God's dealings with me." She fixed her eyes keenly upon me, and said, "Why, Mary, have you no doubts?" "Doubts? How can I doubt?" I exclaimed. "All around and within me is God. I do indeed realize that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Jesus reigns in my heart, without a rival. He is with me when I go out and when I come in, or wherever I am. I never was so happy as I now am; not even when surrounded by my little family. I now feel that I must live for God alone." "Well," said she, "I have been a member of the Church forty years, and *I* have never felt this. If you do not doubt, I must doubt *for* you."

Upon hearing this my heart for a moment sank within me. "Am I *deceived?*" thought I. That moment I was fully assured that I knew in whom I had believed, and was able to adopt the language, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from

the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." I turned to my friend, and said, "Are you never free from doubts?" "No," she replied, "there has never been a day, since I made a profession of religion, that I have been free from them." This astonished me, as I had thought her an exemplary Christian, and had an exalted opinion of her piety. She was deeply affected by my conversation, and I left her in tears. On my way home I called upon an aged widow, and found her reading the blessed Bible. She received me much as my other friend had done, alluding to my lonely situation. I assured her that I was perfectly happy. Upon hearing this she clasped her hands, and cried, "Bless the name of the Lord! I bid you Godspeed, and will overtake you if I can. I am struggling for the same blessing, and hope soon to obtain it." I was as much surprised at her remarks as I had been by those of my former friend. I had no idea that I was making higher attainments than these dear saints. My heart was melted, and I exclaimed, "Lord, why is this—that I should be thus addressed by those so far before me in years and in Christian experience? What am I but a worm?" I think

I never felt my utter insignificance, so much as at this time. I then asked my friend why Mrs. W., whom I had just visited, had expressed so much doubt. She replied, "It is because of unbelief. She does not believe these blessings *attainable*. Therefore she does not seek them." When I parted with this dear friend she said, "Go on: set your mark high, then try to attain to it."

On my way home it was suggested to my mind that Mrs. W. did not believe what I had said. This troubled me much, and I resolved to call on Mr. Thompson, and ask whether I had done wrong in communicating the state of my feelings so freely as I had done to these dear friends. I did so, assuring him that I had acted upon the principle that I must let my light so shine before men, that others seeing my good works might glorify my Father in heaven. He said that some made higher attainments than others, and told me to "go on;" to *keep* all I had received, and get all I could. I expressed fears, lest I should be supposed to think myself better than others, whom I esteemed far above myself. On leaving the house Mrs. T. accompanied me to the gate, and said, "Mrs. Gardner, I do not think

it would be well for you to speak of your feelings to every one. Some will be discouraged, and others will not believe you." These words went like a dagger to my heart. I burst into tears, and cried, "O, what *shall* I do? If I talk at all, it must be of God's goodness to me."

I hastened to my dwelling, and there in secret besought God to lead me in a very plain path; to show me my whole duty, that I might serve him with all my soul, heart, mind, and strength. I knew if I put my light under a bushel, it would be of no benefit to myself or any one else. I shut myself up for several days, desiring, if it was the will of God, that I might live a hermit's life alone with him. I read at this time a tract entitled, "No life pleasing to God but that which is useful to mankind." It led to the discovery of my error in asking for a hermit's life, and I resolved that my life should be a useful one, and devoted to active service in the vineyard of the Lord.

CHAPTER IX.

Her success in looking up destitute children—Nine schools established—Revilings of men—"No armor for the back"—Obliged to travel for her health—Commences a school at Morristown—Severe illness—Remarkable restoration in answer to prayer—The drover—Wantage—Its educational wants.

NOT long after this I was solicited by a sister in the Church to make efforts to gather destitute and other children into the Sunday school. She informed me that a society had just been organized for the purpose of clothing such as were in need, and requested me also to solicit funds for the society. At first I felt an incompetency to the undertaking, which caused me to shrink from it; but as I had been appointed by the society, I felt myself under some obligation to comply; and when I remembered my vow to God, I freely consented.

My interest in the work soon became intense. I found, among others, many children unable to attend the school already established, on account of the distance. To obviate this difficulty we opened nine other schools in different sections of the town, and I was appointed

to visit them. In my researches I also found nearly twenty children, who were almost entirely destitute of decent apparel. These were soon supplied with suitable clothing, and numbered among our regular attendants upon Sunday school. Coextensive with our success in our labors, was the opposition manifested by the ungodly, irreligious men, who would assemble at the store and ridicule the members of the society. Respecting myself, they would say, "Poor thing! How she runs about on foot! Can't we raise a horse and sulky for her? She will be worn out if she goes on in this way. I will be one to give a dollar." When I heard of their deriding me in this way, I was greatly mortified. I had ever felt that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." I knew, if I lost my reputation, I should lose my all. Their revilings proved a snare for me, and I firmly resolved to resign my office. The next morning I called on the person who first sought my aid, and told her that I could not make any *farther* efforts in this way. She endeavored to dissuade me from my purpose, assuring me that the society must inevitably suffer, by

the withdrawal of one of its members at this time. "Well," I replied, "then I will persevere, and arm myself for the fight." As I was leaving her she said, "Remember, Mary, 'there is no armor for the back.'" The remark had great weight with me, and I was fully convinced that I should suffer loss *only* by retreating.

I went home relieved in mind, and greatly encouraged to live for Christ, and steadfastly abound in his work, in "evil as well as in good report." With my eye fixed on my adorable *all*, I found myself insensible to the applause or frowns of my fellow-worms. Shortly after this I had occasion to mention the trial I had experienced to my pastor. He smiled and said, "All public characters will be talked about."

I now assiduously prosecuted the labors I had undertaken. But I soon found them too arduous for my weak body. For nearly a year previous I had been in constant attendance upon the sick and dying. In eleven months I had seen ten of my nearest relatives sicken and die. My own health had now become impaired, and my physician advised me to travel. My friends also urged it upon me.

I was enabled, in reference to the matter, to lie passive in the hands of God. To go or stay was the same to me, so long as I felt assured that the will of God was done. I now visited New York, Patterson, and various other places. These visits occupied one year and a half.

In the year 1827 I commenced a school at Morristown, and soon had a fine number of scholars. The people were anxious that I should engage for the year; but I was so sure that this was not the place designed for me by God, that I refused to engage but for a short time. One morning I took my Bible and opened to these words, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest." Three weeks elapsed, and a violent attack of dysentery compelled me to resign my duties as a teacher, and return to my own village. The weather was so unfavorable to my journey, that I took a violent cold, which settled in my eyes, and for six months I was confined to my room. One day, feeling that I could sit up for a little while, my cousin helped me into a chair; but the exertion was too much for me. My cousin remarked, "Your hands are cold." "Yes," I replied, "I believe I am dying." She

hastily answered, "I believe you are; you look like death! shall I send for the doctor?" "No," I replied, "I would rather see Mr. Thompson." She assisted me to bed, as soon as possible. Here I lay for some time in the most excruciating pain, with scalding water running from my eyes. When Mr. T. came, he was greatly affected to see me in this condition. He kneeled by my bed, and fervently prayed that I might not be taken away till my work was done—pleading the promise, "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." He rose with strong confidence that his prayer would be answered. From that moment all my pain left me, and in three days I was able to go out of my room.

I was, however, very feeble for a long time. During the summer, I was again obliged to travel for my health. While in New York I heard that my cousin and other members of her family were very sick. I immediately returned to them, and endeavored, as much as in my power, to assist them in their affliction, till I was attacked with the same disease that had preyed upon them.

One day, after I was able to sit up, and the rest of the family were fast recovering, Mr.

W. stood at the window, when a drove of cattle passed by. He was at that time desirous of purchasing a cow, and recalled the drover to see if he could get one of *him*. The drover informed him that he could, and that he wished to sell all his cattle in that place. He also wanted to find a lodging-place for himself that night, where his cattle could be accommodated. Mr. W. consented to keep him, and invited him in. During the evening the subject of education was introduced. He remarked that there was a great need of teachers at Wantage, his own town. He said that even the young men were deficient in the first rudiments of education. He also stated that he had taught himself all that he had ever learned of book knowledge, and that was barely sufficient to help him on in his business, and that he was esteemed as learned a man as there was in the place. He further remarked that he had in his own family a large number of apprentices, who were growing up in ignorance, and that *he* had no time to teach them, even if he knew how.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. C.'s importunity and proposal—She consents to go to Wantage—Her journey—Reception and encouraging prospects—Pleasant location of her school-house—Deficiencies of her scholars—Sabbath desecration—Reproof—A good prayer meeting—Establishes a Sabbath school—Difficulties—Great success—Vacates her day school.

“WELL, Mary,” said my cousin, turning to me, and smiling, “there is a chance for *you*.” “Ah!” said Mr. C.—the drover—“are you a teacher? Then you can not do better than to go home with me. I will give you a dollar a week to teach my family, for six months, and you will find it a very healthy place.” I said but little in reply, but soon left the room, and, after having laid it before the Lord, retired for the night. In the night I awoke with these words in my mind, “Go home with that man.” This I thought was very singular, as he was a total stranger to me. I concluded that it was a suggestion of the adversary, and soon fell asleep. I was, however, again suddenly roused from my slumbers, with the same words impressed upon my mind. I then began to reason as to the propriety of pursuing such a course. “How,” thought I, “can it be a

duty for me to go home with that stranger? He may be a very wicked man; and, if he is not, there may be no Church in the place; so that I might be deprived of all the privileges I have so long enjoyed."

Still I was deeply impressed that this was my field of labor. I rose from my bed, and dressed. I again asked myself, "What will Mr. Thompson think of my going to Wantage? Will he not condemn me for such an imprudent course?" But I was again assured that the Lord would direct. As I entered the sitting-room, my cousin said, "Are you going on this mission?" When she discovered that I was, indeed, seriously thinking of it, she was greatly tried with me, that I, in my feeble state of health, should think of going to a strange place, among the mountains. I told her that I felt it to be the will of God that I should go. She said no more about it, but cheerfully submitted, in view of its being the will of God.

Mr. C. still persisted in urging me to go, and I at last promised that in two weeks I would follow him. He was so anxious that I should go, that he drew up a writing, requesting me to affix my signature, thereby binding myself to be there at the appointed time.

Two weeks elapsed, and I commenced my journey in the stage, alone. I had many clear evidences that I was in the way of duty, though I deeply felt that I was called of God "to go out, not knowing whither I went." Late in the afternoon, I arrived at Mr. C.'s house. It was built of logs, and situated upon a high eminence. When I entered, Mrs. C. welcomed me, and said that her husband was so fearful that I might give it up, that he had started after me with his own horse and wagon. She also informed me that Mr. C. had made known my engagement to come, to the neighbors, and they had decided to open the school-house, as nearly all the children in the neighborhood had been engaged for me.

On Monday I was to commence my labors. Many of the parents came to welcome me, and seemed happy to have their children instructed. The next day after my arrival I was obliged to keep my bed through the day, in order to recover from the fatigue which I had endured. Early on Monday morning I started for the school-house, which was a mile distant. As I came near I found that it was situated at the foot of a hill, shut in on three sides by dense woods. In the rear there was a beautiful

spring of pure water. When I entered I found seventeen large scholars waiting for me, ten of whom, I afterward learned, were unable to name a single letter of the alphabet.

On the succeeding Sabbath I was roused at an early hour by the sound of the ax. I looked through the window, and saw one of the boys cutting wood for the oven. I was much surprised, and thought they must have forgotten what day it was. I took my Bible, and went into the next room. Here I found Mrs. C. kneading bread, and several of the apprentices, who had just come in from the woods, where they had been gathering nuts. "Mrs. C.," I exclaimed, "do you know what day it is!" "Why, yes," she replied, "it is Sunday." "Have you never read in the Bible," I continued, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates?" She appeared not to notice my question, but asked me if I knew how to make doughnuts. I told her that I did. "Well," said she,

“now just make me some. My brother and his wife are coming here to-day to see *you*, and I want to have every thing nice.” “I can not make them to-day,” I replied, “because it is Sunday.” She looked at me rather sharply, and said, “Then *I* shall make them, and not let *you* have any.” I told her that I did not wish any, and could by no means consent to partake of food that was cooked with wood split on the Sabbath.

I found that the Sabbath in this place was regarded as a day for recreation, and even professors of religion did not seem to think it wrong—their consciences seeming to be “seared as with a hot iron.” On the Sabbath before alluded to, religious services had been suspended in the Presbyterian Church on account of the temporary absence of their pastor. I was, however, informed that the Methodists of the place were to hold a prayer meeting a short distance from Mrs. C.’s. I resolved to go, and Mrs. C. accompanied me. When I entered the room, I felt that the disciples of Jesus were there. They evidently spoke, sang, and prayed in the spirit. In reflecting upon the state of religion in this place, I concluded that visiting and working on the

Sabbath could not be more efficiently checked than by establishing a Sunday school. I made an attempt to do this, but found that I had almost insurmountable difficulties to contend with, owing to the ignorance of the people. At last, Mrs. C. gave permission for it to be held at her house. On the third Sabbath after we opened the school, the number of scholars so much increased that we decided to meet at the school-house. Many of the parents came with their children, seeking instruction. I had no assistant, and my library was limited to a few books, and a bundle of tracts, which had been given me. The children were very anxious to improve, and consequently learned very fast. I usually commenced my labors at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, and continued till sunset. After remaining here for three months, I was obliged to relinquish my week-day school—which had increased to forty scholars—on account of the severity of the weather, and my excessive labors. I however continued my Sunday school through the winter.

CHAPTER XI.

Resumes her labors—Why a little girl did not learn the commandments—Addresses her scholars on the duty of keeping the Sabbath day holy—An opposer changed to an assistant—His deep conviction—His conversion.

As soon as the cold weather had passed away, and my health would permit, I resumed my labors. I now boarded with different families. I found that a more intimate acquaintance with the parents greatly augmented my influence over them. I had a great desire that all the children should learn the commandments, and requested that they should recite them for a lesson on the following Sabbath. When they came to recite I found that several had not learned them. Upon making inquiries as to the cause of their delinquency, one little girl said that her father had looked “all through the New Testament,” without being able to find them. I then directed them to look in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. By the next Sunday they had them perfectly. The parents had the impression that I pursued this course, for the purpose of finding out how much they knew of the Bible. After they had repeated the commandments, I told

the children that on the next Sabbath I would address them from the words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and asked them to invite their parents.

When Sunday came I was quite sick, having had a heavy chill. My good friends with whom I boarded thought it imprudent for me to go; but the Lord, who was "the strength of my life," enabled me to meet the engagement. When I arrived I found the house filled. Some were there whom I knew were violent opposers, and such as delighted in ridiculing religion. I was deeply impressed with my utter incompetency to the work before me, and had almost despondingly said, "Who is sufficient for these things?" when the sweet assurance that I could "do all things through Christ strengthening me," afforded me very timely relief, and great encouragement. I was enabled to resign my will, my reputation, and my all, into the hands of my great Helper, praying that in my extreme weakness his strength might be made perfect. I had great liberty in prayer, and, through the whole of my remarks, was deeply conscious of the aid of the Holy Spirit. I had observed, as I came to the school, that three of my scholars were

sliding down a haystack; I resolved to speak of it in my remarks. I therefore took occasion to ask them, if gathering nuts on the Sabbath day was keeping it holy; if *visiting* was keeping the Sabbath day holy; if sliding down a haystack would be keeping the Sabbath day holy. The children looked much ashamed, and confessed that they had done wrong. I told them if they were to visit the state prisons and common jails, and ask the miserable beings confined there, what was the first step in their downward course, they would undoubtedly hear them answer, "*Sabbath-breaking!*" I then spoke very solemnly on this subject, when both parents and children seemed deeply affected.

There was one person present whom I had particularly noticed on coming in. He had been unfavorable to the Sunday school, and prevented his little boy from attending. But the little fellow had, nevertheless, succeeded in getting there the Sabbath previous, and had conveyed to his father my invitation for the parents to be present. To my request he had added his own importunities, till he had succeeded in bringing his father to the Sunday school; although it was afterward found that

he had come there from wicked motives. After I had dismissed the scholars he tarried behind, and said, "Mrs. Gardner, you are doing a *great deal* for us: you labor hard through the week, and then teach all day Sunday, for which you *get* nothing. If I could be of any service to you, I should be happy to assist you in teaching these *little ones*. I highly approve of what you have said; I did not know that the Sunday school was what it is." I expressed gratitude for the kind offer, and accepted it.

The next Sabbath he came, looking very solemn, and greatly changed in his appearance. I offered him a class of large scholars; but he refused, saying that he knew nothing about the Bible himself, and did not feel competent to instruct others. He therefore took a class of little children.

When the school was dismissed he again lingered behind. He approached the desk, and said, "Mrs. Gardner, after we had returned home from this place last Sunday evening, and were sitting down to the tea-table, my little boy said to me, 'Pa, won't you pray? My teacher always prays when we eat at school.' I endeavored to evade his question by telling

him to eat his supper. He obeyed me, but soon looking me in the face, said, 'Pa, isn't it wicked to say devil? You call sheep devil.' This was an arrow in my heart; I could eat no more, but rose and left the table. My child had reproved me. I felt that my wickedness was very great. In the evening, as he was about to retire, he asked me to teach him how to pray; but I could not. I have passed a very distressed week. I feel that I am a vile sinner in the sight of God."

From this hour he earnestly sought for mercy, till he obtained a clear evidence that he was born again, of that incorruptible seed which beareth fruit unto eternal life. God, in his wise providence, soon removed him from that place, but, I am informed, still owns and blesses him as one of his dear children.

CHAPTER XII.

Revival—Meetings are held in the woods by the children—Violent persecution—Meetings removed to a blacksmith's shop—To a loft—Interview with the Rev. Mr. A. and Deacon C.—The children are permitted to hold their meetings in the school-house—Interesting mode of conducting the meetings.

THIS was the commencement of a very gracious revival of religion, which spread throughout the whole country. It is called the "great revival" even to this day. After the conversion and removal of Mr. F., the work continued to spread in the school. Many of the children were deeply impressed with the importance of saving their souls. Unknown to me, their deep concern had induced them to establish a prayer meeting, which they held during their hours for recreation. An acquaintance one day said to me, "Why do you drive the children into the woods to pray and sing?" I replied, that I had not known of their praying in the woods, and certainly had not *sent* them there. She then told me that different owners of the woods had persecuted them. At one time, when they had selected, as they thought, a suitable place for

prayer, the owner of the field came and pelted them with stones. This compelled them to select another spot, which they had not long enjoyed, when the owner came and told them that he should have no singing or praying on his grounds, and ordered them off. I was deeply moved with this intelligence, and asked her advice as to what course I should pursue. In reply she said, rather sharply, "Who ever heard of such children getting religion?" "Shall I tell them," said I, "that Mrs. —— wishes them to stop praying?" "O, no!" she replied, "I do not wish to take that responsibility."

The next day, when their recess was over, I gave the usual signal for their return, but could see nothing of them. About fifteen minutes after the time they came in. I reproofed them for their tardiness, and asked them where they had been. They were much affected by my reproof, and said they had been half a mile down the road to a blacksmith's shop, which was unoccupied, to hold their meeting.

I was now greatly perplexed. I could not invite them into the school-room, on account of the opposition manifested by the trustees.

I knew if the owner of the shop, Mr. T., should find that the children had prayed there, he would be very angry. I was just ready to persuade them to give up their prayer meeting, when I was reminded of the loft over the school-room. But there were no steps by which to ascend to it, neither was it a desirable place for prayer. It was, however, no sooner mentioned, than the children were found eager to accept it. Two of the young men climbed up and stood at the opening above, while two stood below. With the assistance of these four young men the children were all lifted up, and in a few minutes I heard them praying in a very fervent manner. My feelings could better be imagined than described. I also kneeled and commended them into the hands of God, entreating that he would deliver them from the power of the adversary, and make his name glorious in that place, by ruling in the midst of his enemies; and that he would in nowise permit the wolf to devour these lambs of the flock.

During that day a note was placed in my hands, from Mr. A., the pastor, stating that he would preach in the school-room that evening. I announced it to my scholars, and

in the evening the house was crowded. As Mr. A. entered the room, he expressed a desire to speak with me after the close of the services, and then passed on to the desk. I had many fears lest he might design reproving me relative to the scholars. When the meeting was closed, Mr. A. and Deacon C. both tarried. Mr. A. said he had heard that there was a revival of religion in my school, and that the children had been persecuted. "It is," said he, "your duty to protect them. You may hereafter let them hold their prayer meeting in the school-room, and *we* will take the responsibility." How did my heart rejoice, when I heard these welcome words! What a weight was removed from my mind! I now felt myself at liberty to labor with the children for the conversion of their souls. The next day I gave them an invitation to meet me in the school-room, promising to protect them.

After they had eaten their dinners, which they had brought to school in their little baskets, I desired them to proceed according to their usual custom. They were soon all quietly seated on their benches—six boys sitting together on one side of the room. One of the boys then gave out a hymn, which

they united in singing, with great animation. They then kneeled in prayer, when two of the boys, in succession, led their devotions. They then sang another hymn, and continued their exercises in this manner till six of the boys had prayed. They appeared much in earnest, and not in the least embarrassed by my presence. At the close of the meeting, I fell upon my knees and poured out my soul in thanksgiving and praise, for that privilege of praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, upon parents as well as children. This was the most interesting prayer meeting that I ever attended.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. D. visits the school—The children proceed with their prayer meeting—Effect produced on Mr. D.—Hymn—Interview between the two trustees—Mr. P.—Mr. D., his wife and three children are converted—Unhappy scholar—His melancholy end.

THE next day, just before the intermission, I received a morning visit from Mr. D., one of the trustees. He remained after I had dismissed the school. I at once thought he had heard of the meetings, and desired to be pres-

ent. I was somewhat fearful, as he was not a pious man, lest he should interfere. I secretly wished that the scholars would omit their meeting for that day; but was, at last, enabled to leave it *altogether* with the Lord, trusting that his Holy Spirit would direct. Mr. D. seated himself near where I sat, and commenced a conversation. The scholars appeared to take no notice of us, but proceeded with their meeting, according to their usual custom. One of the boys opened the hymn-book, and read,

“Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound;
My ears attend the cry:
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie.”

While they were singing, Mr. D., turning to me, said, “Mrs. Gardner, your scholars sing well.” He was proceeding with other remarks, when he was interrupted by all the scholars falling upon their knees for prayer. The boy who led their devotions first prayed that the Holy Spirit would teach them how to pray, and what to pray for. He then began to pray, in a very fervent manner, for Mr. D., calling him by name. Mr. D. suddenly turned his back toward me, and rested his elbow upon the desk, and his face in his hand. As soon

as this dear youth had ceased praying, another began, when Mr. D. fell upon his knees. As they rose from prayer, they commenced singing,

“Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve;
Come, with your guilt and fears opprest,
And make this last resolve.

I’ll go to Jesus, though my sin
Hath like a mountain rose;
I know his courts, I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

Prostrate I’ll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess;
I’ll tell him I’m a wretch undone,
Without his pard’ning grace.

Perhaps he will admit my plea;
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But, if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

I can *but* perish, if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For, if I stay away, I know
I shall forever die.

And should I die, with mercy sought,
When I the King have tried,
I there shall die—delightful thought!—
Where ne’er a sinner died.”

When the meeting was closed, Mr. D. immediately retired, and directed his steps to a field near by, where Mr. P.—another of the trustees—was at work. Mr. P., on observing

that Mr. D. had been weeping, anxiously inquired as to the cause. He replied, "I have been to the meeting at the school-house; I never was in such a meeting before. It must be the work of the Lord, and it is *your* duty, as well as *mine*, to protect Mrs. Gardner and her scholars." Mr. P. was a pious man, and endeavored to direct him to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. This was a remarkable day in the history of Mr. D. He returned home deeply convicted for sin, and in a short time, himself, wife, and three children, were hopefully converted to God.

The children continued to hold their meetings unmolested. Many sought and obtained the witness that they were born again. One day I observed one of the boys, who had been the most active in conducting their meetings, sitting alone, and taking no part in their exercises. Observing that he looked very sad, I took my seat by him, and asked what was the matter. "Timothy," said I, "you look very unhappy. You do not take a part in the meetings as formerly." He burst into tears, and said that his mother had forbidden his joining in worship with them, saying that he

was too young to have religion, and threatened to punish him, if she heard any more about his praying. When he told me this, my heart bled for him. I gave him the best advice I could, but it proved unavailing, as his mother was so bitterly opposed to the conversion of one so young. She did not believe it possible. Her error had a blighting influence upon poor Timothy. From that time he became very reserved, and silent when addressed upon the subject of religion. When the meetings were held, he would retire outside the school-house, and there sit by himself alone and weep.

His mother was a widow, and in the following spring found it necessary to take him out of school, and place him on a farm. He continued in this occupation the two following years. One pleasant summer day he went with his brother to get the horses. As his brother was harnessing two of them, Timothy jumped upon the third, already tackled for the plow, and rode off to the field. His brother soon followed, expecting when he came there to find Timothy plowing. But, to his great surprise, neither Timothy nor the horse were there. On looking around, he saw the footsteps of the horse, which indicated that he

had been running. He was alarmed, and concluded to follow his steps, calling aloud for his brother. After he had gone near three-quarters of a mile, he found the horse in a thicket, just at the entrance of a dense wood, and, horrible to relate! poor Timothy was hanging by his side! He had been thrown from the horse, and, his foot having caught in the traces, he had been dragged along over the rough road with great violence. Not a vestige of his face or head was to be seen.

This was the sad end of the child I had so prayerfully commended to the mercy of God. If he was too young to serve and love God, he certainly was *not* too young to die. But, in an hour when he least expected, he was summoned to bid adieu to earthly scenes, and enter upon the untried realities of eternity. Let *children* be also ready; for in such an hour as *they* think not the Son of man cometh.

CHAPTER XIV.

Exhortation to children—Numbers awakened—Deacon R.'s powerful prayer—Timely assistance—Persecution—New field of labor—Affecting parting—Universalist teacher—His conversion.

I SHALL now return from this digression, to the school, which had but just received permission to pray. The first Sabbath after this permission was given, I endeavored to speak to the children upon the importance of securing the salvation of their souls. God was pleased to bless the feeble effort in a very powerful manner. I observed that Deacon R., a Baptist brother, was present. I had supposed that he was opposed to revivals, and especial efforts for the conversion of young children. But I was enabled, through grace, to cast aside all fear of man, and boldly to invite all the children, who had any desire to serve God and seek for the pardon of their sins, to come forward to the front seat, and kneel with others who were willing to pray for them. Twenty-one of the children immediately rose and came forward. It was a melting season. I discovered that Deacon R. was deeply affected, and was emboldened to invite

him to unite with us in prayer. He kneeled, and evidently prayed as the Spirit gave him utterance.

Not long after this Miss Thompson wrote me a letter, offering to assist me in my labors. This greatly cheered me, and I felt most heartily to respond, "Come over and help us." She soon arrived, and I was favored with her invaluable labors through the winter. During the season thirty-five members of the Sabbath school joined the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. Soon after Miss Thompson's departure, the persecution again revived; but it was confined chiefly to three men. One of these three was a trustee. The majority of the people were in my favor, but the minority ruled by violent proceedings.

In compliance with the advice of my friends, I determined to enter upon a new field of labor two miles distant. I however pledged myself not to leave them till they had secured another teacher. One morning, as I approached the school-house, I saw several men standing near it. One of them stepped toward me, and said, "Mrs. Gardner, we have got another teacher, and shall not need your services any longer." I was, of course, very

happy to hear it, as my other school was waiting for me. I then passed into the school-house to get my books. The children all gathered round me weeping; little Mary W. came to me, and said, "O, Mrs. Gardner, won't you let me go with you?" I replied, "No, my dear; the school will be very large, besides you would have to walk four miles every day." She burst into tears, and said, "Our *new* teacher won't pray for us." "Well, my dear," said I, "then you must pray for *him*." Just at that moment the teacher, who had been behind the door, stepped forward. He was a fine-looking young man, very prepossessing, but a Universalist in sentiment. "Thank you, madam," said he, "I can pray for myself." "I am very glad to hear it," I replied; "because, if you can pray for yourself, you will be able to pray for these dear children. It has been, and I trust ever will be, an earnest prayer of mine, that they may never have a teacher that will not pray for them." I now left the weeping group, committing them to the hands of my heavenly Father.

The arrangement had been made for him to board in different families, as I had done.

He first went to Mrs. W.'s. During the night his mind was so disturbed that he could not sleep. He thought, at one time, that there was a voice calling him, and saying, "Seek the Lord!" He was so *sure* that he did hear a voice, he rose from his bed and went to Mrs. W.'s room and asked her if she had called him. She told him that she had not, and that all the family were asleep. Thinking that he had been mistaken, he again retired, but could not rest; his mind was indeed like the troubled sea. The next morning he went to the school, with a determination to go to Deacon R.'s the next night. He did so, hoping to spend a more comfortable night; but, alas! he could not sleep there. In the morning he told Mrs. R. that he had decided to give up the school, as he did not feel contented to remain. She asked him if the scholars were not diligent in their studies. "Studies!" said he, "why, they study all the time, and then their intermission is spent in singing and prayer. I have tried to get them to play ball with me, but they prefer holding their meetings in the woods; besides, what is still worse, when they look at me their countenances seem to say, '*You have no religion.*'"

After having eaten his dinner, he concluded to walk silently to the place where they held their meeting, and observe how they proceeded. He therefore placed himself behind a tree unobserved. He had not stood there long before he heard them praying very fervently for himself. The deep fountain of his heart was broken up. He rushed toward the school-house, and fell upon his knees in an agony of despair. The afternoon passed away; but only to *bear* report to *heaven* of sighs and groans with which his bosom heaved. As he was about to dismiss the school, one of the scholars said to him, "Mr. S., won't you pray with us?" "I can not," he replied, "but *you* may pray." Ira, a boy of fourteen, immediately kneeled and prayed. The next morning Mr. S. called upon Ira's twin brother to open the school with prayer, and at evening he prayed himself.

Soon after this he was hopefully converted, and connected himself with the Methodist Church. Thus God, in a very surprising manner, answered my prayer for the dear children. I had found among this people a few enlightened and pious families, to whom I had become greatly attached.

CHAPTER XV.

Picturesque scenery—Interesting scholars—Responsibility—Opens a Sabbath school—The children engage in various benevolent projects—Singing introduced—“Fletcher’s Checks”—Cottage in the woods—History of its inmates.

ON my way to my new field of labor, on ascending the mountain, I was struck with the beautiful prospect before me. At my feet lay the Clove, the field for my future labors. Through the center ran a beautiful creek, whose sparkling waters added much to the beauty of the surrounding scenery, while in its course its superior force swayed the operations of many a mill and factory, till at last it emptied itself into the “Wallkill” river. The Clove was three-quarters of a mile in width, and about ten miles in length. On one side rose a high mountain, covered with variegated fields, and interspersed with all kinds of forest-trees, such as the pine, cedar, and hemlock. Among these could be seen the beautiful laurel, with its dark, glossy leaves. Numerous herds of cattle could be seen grazing in the valley below. I stopped for a few moments to survey this lovely scene; and as my heart seemed to ascend “from nature up to nature’s

God," I felt to exclaim, "My Father made them all!"

I now descended the declivity, crossed the creek, and in a few minutes was at the door of my new field of labor. I found about thirty children quietly seated, waiting my arrival. They were all neatly clad, and their smiling faces, as I entered, quite rejoiced my heart. It was to me one of the most delightful sights that I ever beheld. As I walked to the farther end of the room I stepped into the desk, and turned to look upon this interesting group; my heart was melted, and my eyes filled with tears. The responsibility of my situation came fearfully up before me, and I was led to exclaim, "O, my God! am *I* sufficient for these things?" The Spirit sweetly whispered, "My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness." I took my Bible and read a chapter, and then bowed before the mercy-seat with these dear children, committing them, with myself, into the hands of the Almighty, earnestly imploring his blessings upon my future labors in this place.

I soon opened a Sabbath school in the place, and found many intelligent and pious persons

ready to aid me. The faithful efforts of the parents were superadded to mine, in striving to improve the morals and cultivate the minds of the children. A missionary box was placed upon my desk, in which, from time to time, they dropped their pennies, refusing to spend any for candies or toys. A juvenile fragment society was also organized. In this the parents furnished the children with materials for their work. Such was the interest which they felt in the enterprise, that they devoted their hours for recreation almost exclusively to making articles for the society, which, at the end of the year, enabled them to realize fifteen dollars, besides having made a bed-quilt for their parsonage. The money was distributed among different religious and benevolent societies. During my visit in New York I had visited several schools, where the pupils sang very sweetly. I proposed teaching my scholars to sing, but the parents did not greatly encourage it. I, however, made the attempt, and they were soon able to sing the praises of God in a very delightful manner.

About this time a Methodist preacher called to visit my school, and gave me "Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism" to read. I care-

fully perused its contents, and found the doctrines therein contained equally new and interesting. I wondered that I had never met with this work before. All my life I had been trying to believe in the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, but had never succeeded. I was now enabled clearly to see, that when God converted me from nature's darkness to his marvelous light, that he also converted me from that doctrine which teaches that only an elect few are saved. It now became the burden of my prayers, that the doctrine of full and free salvation might be received and preached by all evangelical Christians.

About half a mile from my school-house I had discovered a small cottage, situated in the woods, whose inmates seemed to have scarcely the necessaries of life. Upon making inquiries, I found that it was occupied by two poor families, who subsisted by basket-making. They seemed to shrink from intercourse with their neighbors, and when any one approached their house the children would run behind the trees, and hide themselves. I had often passed their isolated dwelling, and my feelings had become deeply enlisted in their behalf. I

lifted my heart in prayer to God, to know what he would have me do for this people, resolving to embrace the earliest opportunity to visit them. One pleasant day I therefore took with me a pious friend, and directed my steps toward their dwelling. When we came near the door we found it open, but could see no one. We knocked loudly for admittance, but received no answer. At last we concluded to step in, and wait till some one should appear. As we entered we were struck with the extreme poverty yet neatness of the place—the floor, in the center of which was an unfinished basket, of a marble whiteness. On one side of the room there was a rough table, two old chairs, and several blocks of wood used for seats. This comprised the furniture of the room. There was another room adjoining this, the door of which was partly opened. As I cast my eyes toward it I distinctly saw a female figure behind it, and found that she was engaged in looking through the crevice at her new visitants. I ventured to speak to her, when she immediately came into the room and took a seat. She had a delicate form, and a very lovely countenance. When she spoke, intelligence beamed from her eye.

She was, however, retiring in her manners, and seemed much embarrassed by our presence. Her dress, though very clean and neatly repaired, indicated extreme poverty. I asked her if she would not like to send her children to the school, then under my charge. Her eyes filled with tears, as she said, "I should be very happy to do so, but I am unable either to supply them with suitable clothing or pay for their instruction." I asked her if she would be able to make their clothes if she had the materials. She replied, that she had long been accustomed to make all the clothing for her family. I assured her that she need have no difficulty in paying for their tuition, and offered to instruct them gratuitously.

I then made some inquiries respecting the other family that lived in the house. The children were all there, but the parents were absent. I found from her account of them that they were equally needy. I left her with a request that all the children should be sent to school without delay. From her house I went to the house of Mr. C., a wealthy gentleman who lived near, and made known to his wife the condition of these families. The

Lord opened her heart, and she immediately sent an ample supply both for the parents and children. In a few days the children came to school, with smiling faces, and very neatly clad. Their mothers also soon appeared at Church, which from this time they attended regularly, accompanied by their children.

The husbands of these afflicted women had been very intemperate; but these little attentions to their families had quite raised their spirits. In a short time they entirely renounced their intemperate habits, and, instead of selling baskets, they found employment among the farmers. Mrs. C. and others supplied the women with work, and they were soon raised from their deep distress to very comfortable circumstances. Their children did not know a letter of the alphabet when they entered the school; but so rapid was their progress, that before twelve months had expired they were all able to read, and the elder ones could write a tolerable hand. Such improvements far exceeded my most sanguine expectations.

CHAPTER XVI.

Encouraging success—The stranger—Assists in organizing another Sabbath school—Arduous labors—Illness—Female prayer meeting—Plan of proceeding—Various objects of importunity—Mr. L.'s sermon—Interesting experience of a lady.

My school continued to increase in interest as well as numbers, and in a few months I had nearly fifty scholars, among whom were adults of both sexes. The Lord truly prospered me in all my ways. As I entered my school one Sabbath afternoon, I perceived that a stranger, apparently about forty years of age, had come in with us. I supposed that he had come for the purpose of assisting as a teacher, and, therefore, invited him to take a class. To my great astonishment he replied, that he had not come to *teach*, but to *be taught*, as he did not know how to read! He then voluntarily took a seat appropriated to the little boys, and gave me fifty cents for my library.

About four miles from this place was a Methodist Church, where they were anxious to establish a Sunday school. They had requested me to assist in their enterprise,

which I consented to do. For some time I regularly attended both this school, which commenced at eight o'clock in the morning, and my own, which commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon. This made it necessary for me to walk eight miles every Sabbath, except when the weather was unfavorable, and then a conveyance was provided for me. As a result of my arduous labors, I was visited, in the month of August, with a severe illness. In answer to the many prayers offered in my behalf, I was again in a few weeks enabled to resume my labors with renewed vigor. I was, however, obliged to relinquish the Methodist Sabbath school, but had the satisfaction of knowing that it still went on prosperously. In addition to other means of grace, it seemed desirable to have a female prayer meeting. This subject had long rested upon my mind with peculiar weight. I therefore conversed with my sisters in the Church upon the subject, and found them ready to unite with me. We now found a difficulty in deciding where to meet. I proposed holding it at the school-house, but others objected to it, fearing that it might subject us to persecution and ridicule. I assured them that the

Lord would meet with us, and we need not fear what man can do or say.

After much conversation we at last agreed to meet at the school-house every Thursday afternoon. The notice was read before the school, with a request that all the scholars should invite their female friends, of every age, to attend. We felt that it was a great undertaking; but we assembled in the great name of Him who said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them." At the hour appointed the place was filled. Some had doubtless come to gratify their curiosity, while others had come in with true hearts, and as sincere worshipers. The principal leaders of this meeting were Mrs. B., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Mrs. K., of the Baptist Church, and Mrs. W., Mrs. C., and myself, of the Presbyterian Church.

It was proposed that, on opening the meeting, each sister should present some special subject for prayer. Mrs. B. arose and said, as her family were all converted, she would present the different Churches to which they belonged, with the hope that God would graciously revive his work, and abundantly bless

the labors of his ministering servants. Mrs. K. presented her three children; Mrs. C., her husband and three children; Mrs. W., a poor woman, then present, whose curiosity had brought her there; and *I* presented myself and school.

We now proceeded with our exercises, and found that God was eminently present to encourage and strengthen our waiting souls. Mrs. S., the poor woman alluded to, left the house deeply convicted of sin. Mrs. C. was interrogated by her husband respecting the gathering he had observed at the school-house. She told him there had been a meeting there; but, as he was an opposer, she was loth to tell him what *kind* of a meeting it was. She did, however, in answer to his repeated inquiries, tell him, that it was a *female prayer meeting*. Upon hearing this, he said, "Did you pray for me?" "Certainly we did," said Mrs. C. He made no reply; but it was soon discovered that he was less prone to speak evil of the things of God than he had previously been. He also attended Church on the Sabbath, instead of attending to his secular affairs, as formerly. In about three weeks he became a humble and devoted Christian.

While Mr. C. was under conviction, he one day came to my school-house and requested me to suspend the duties of my school for a day or two, and accompany himself and wife in their attendance upon a camp meeting, to be held eighteen miles distant. I readily complied with the request, and the next morning we set off. As soon as we had arrived, and were comfortably provided for, I was invited to listen to a sermon on sanctification, from Mr. L. I listened with commingled interest and scrutiny, as I had never before heard a sermon on that subject. A heavy rain prevented evening services, except in the tents. I was greatly fatigued, and therefore retired at an early hour, and soon fell asleep. I was, however, soon awakened by a Miss H., a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who informed me, that a lady on the opposite side of the camp-ground had experienced sanctification. "I have not seen her," said she, "but they tell me that her face shines as did Moses' when he descended from the mount." I felt a strong desire to see her, and immediately arose, and was preparing to go to her, when my friends asked me where I was going. Upon being informed, they remonstrated with me,

on account of the lateness of the hour, and the heavy rain, which descended in torrents. "Wait till morning," said one dear sister. "O, no," I replied, "I can not think of waiting; she will be dead before morning: no one can *live* in that state." The simplicity of my remarks provoked their smiles; but they assured me that she was now but just *ready* to live. But I could not be dissuaded from my purpose. The tent was pointed out to me, and I ran with full speed across the ground, till I reached it. When I arrived, and was about entering the tent, a gentleman standing near me said, "You can not go in—it is too full already." "Hinder me not," I replied, "for God hath bidden me." I was then permitted to pass on.

As I entered, I saw a person sitting in the middle of the tent, whom I thought was the most lovely creature I had ever beheld—her countenance was angelic, and heaven seemed beaming from her eyes. She was absorbed in conversation with those around her, endeavoring to point them to the Lamb of God. At intervals she would look up, and, clasping her hands, exclaim, "Precious Jesus! precious Jesus!"

The place seemed awful on account of the presence of God. The ground whereon I stood seemed hallowed. I fell upon my knees near her; she extended her hand, and addressed me by the endearing name of *sister*. I ventured to give her my hand, when she took it in both hers, and began to talk very sweetly to me. She said that she had been struggling for this blessing for ten years; but had never received it till that afternoon, while listening to the sermon from Mr. L. I told her that if the Lord would spare my life, I would be willing to seek it *fifteen* years, if, at the end of the time, I could feel as she did. "There is no need of that," said she, "I now see clearly that it is obtained by a simple act of faith. It is taking God at his *word*. Believe *now*. It is *present faith*, exercised in a *present Savior*." She then said, "Where do you stand?" I said that I did not know. She then told me all my heart, and could not have described my feelings better if she had always known me.

I continued with her till the next morning at ten o'clock, when she returned to her home. I was afterward informed by her brother that she continued in the full enjoy-

ment of this blessing for a year and a half, when she was called home to her reward in heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. T.'s views of Christian perfection—Mrs. C.'s account of the camp meeting—Conversion of Mrs. S.—Temperance reformation—Thoughts on engaging as a missionary teacher—Call to a destitute district—An opposer disarmed.

NEW light now broke in upon my soul, and it was with much regret that I left the tented grove. As I returned home, I had great joy and peace in believing. What union of soul with the people I had just left! What intense desires that the Church to which I belonged should partake of like precious faith! To walk and talk with God, and realize from day to day, that he owns and blesses, I felt to be the privilege of every believer. "Why," thought I, "is this glorious doctrine confined to the Methodist Episcopal Church?"

As soon as I reached my home, I hastened to the house of my pastor, Rev. Mr. T., a devoted Christian, and faithful ambassador of Christ. When he saw me, he said, "Well,

Mrs. Gardner, you have been to the camp meeting, I hear." I answered in the affirmative, adding that it had proved a very great blessing to my soul. He desired me to give him some account of it. I did so, and spoke very freely of the impressions I had received. He seemed deeply interested in the rehearsal. I asked if he thought a person could live holy in this world. He replied, "We are not fit to live here, and enjoy God, unless we *are* holy." I then asked why so few enjoyed sanctification, and why the doctrine was confined to the Methodist Episcopal Church. He said he did not think it was confined to them; that there was a great variety of opinions on the subject; and the difficulties seemed to arise from the use and misapprehension of certain terms expressing it. "It is called," said he, "by the Methodists, 'perfection,' and many suppose they mean sinless perfection." He then remarked, that while tabernacled in clay we could not expect to be perfect as God, or as perfect as the holy angels; but we *might* expect to be perfect *Christians*—that is, love him with all the heart, and serve Him with all our powers—and it was his opinion that, if we lived as we ought, we should go on to perfec-

tion as soon as we are justified. He also regarded it a progressive work. I reminded him that it was an *instantaneous* work in the case of the lady I had seen at camp meeting. He smiled and said, "She has only stepped out of the seventh chapter of Romans into the eighth: let us do so too."

Just at this moment, my friend, Mrs. C., who had accompanied me to the camp meeting, came in; she was an exemplary Christian, and loved the Savior. Mr. T. addressed her, by saying, "Well, Mrs. C., you have been to the camp meeting. Have you had a good time?" "I have not," was her prompt reply. "To me," she continued, "it was a barren meeting." Mr. T. seemed much surprised, and inquired into the cause. "O," said she, "there is so much wild-fire and fanaticism among that people, *I* couldn't enjoy it. There was a lady there, who said she was *sanctified!* I listened to her conversation till I became disgusted and left the tent. I have come home far more hard-hearted than I was when I went." Mrs. T., who was present, said, "Mrs. C., you remind me of the spies, who were sent to Jericho. Mrs. Gardner has just brought us a delightful cluster of grapes; but

you speak evil of the land. When you go home, study your Bible, pray over it, examine your heart, and pray that God would 'sanctify *you* wholly,' as he did Mrs. B. at the meeting."

The female prayer meeting, which we had established, continued to increase in interest. Mrs. S., the poor woman for whom our prayers had been solicited, was, in a short time, heard to tell of the wonderful goodness of God, which had led her to repentance. The work spread, and a very gracious revival ensued. Many of my dear pupils were born of the Spirit, and joined with us, in ascribing praise to Him who had loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own precious blood. Both the daughter and husband of Mrs. C. were among the converts, which she considered more than an ample reward for the time which she had devoted to the interests of the meeting.

Mrs. K. had the happiness of seeing her two daughters, whom she had presented as subjects for prayer, rejoicing in God, the rock of their salvation. I have since thought that this was the most profitable mode of conducting a female prayer meeting, it being quite as

public as any other meeting of the Church, and not confined to its members.

About this time the subject of temperance was agitated among this people. In the township there were eleven distilleries, twelve stores, and several taverns, where spirituous liquors were sold. It had been suggested that the young, as well as the old, should become interested in this subject. A pledge was put into my hands for my scholars, to which fifteen names were soon annexed.

For some time previous to this I had been listening with interest to the loud calls for teachers in the valley of the Mississippi, and other destitute portions of the United States. I was pained to see so few who were willing to devote themselves to this work, and was led to inquire, "Lord, shall I go?"

I had just become acquainted with a pious young man, who had often visited my school, and had consented to take charge of it, in case I should wish to give it up. I therefore concluded to relinquish this field of labor, and give myself up to the missionary society, to be sent where I could be of the greatest benefit to my fellow-beings.

After taking an affectionate leave of my

dear friends here, I returned to the city of New York. While busily employed in making preparation for the missionary work, I received a letter from Mr. T., urging me to return again to Wantage; stating that there was a destitute district upon the mountains, where they were in great need of a teacher, and the people had expressed a strong desire to secure my services. Mr. T. gave it as his opinion that I could not find a more useful field of labor. Having great confidence in his judgment, I heeded his advice, and without delay hastened to the relief of this destitute people.

The temperance society at this time had greatly augmented its influence and numbers. Its members now numbered four hundred and forty-five; two of the taverns had been closed; but five of the eleven distilleries were never expected to be in use again; and there was no rum sold at any of the stores.

I soon became deeply interested in my new field of labor. The people received me joyfully, and I had very flattering prospects of being abundantly successful in the work of the Lord. I had taught but a few days, when one of the trustees called upon me, and requested me to give notice to my school that

there would be a meeting of the trustees that evening. I asked him for what purpose it was to be held. He informed me, that Mr. C., an influential member, and one of the trustees, was violently opposed to having the school opened and closed with prayer. I told him, though I was unwilling to act in opposition to the wishes of my employers, yet I felt that I must be perfectly free in this matter, and suggested that it might be well for me to leave. He said that he thought the majority were in my favor, and that no difficulty would ensue. The next morning I was informed that I was at liberty to conduct the exercises of the school in any way that might be agreeable to my own views of duty and propriety.

A Sabbath school was soon established, the parents and others engaging in it as teachers. A missionary box was placed upon my desk, for the reception of such contributions as the children were disposed to make. The pennies which had been previously expended for candies, toys, and other short-lived enjoyments, were now, with smiling faces and happy hearts, dropped into this little box. Much good was done through this instrumentality; but eternity alone can tell the full result.

When I entered upon this field of labor, I found it necessary to board around among my employers, as I had previously done, each family boarding me according to the number of pupils they sent to the school. It had often been suggested to me by my friends, that it would be better for me not to go to board with the above-mentioned Mr. C., as he was unfriendly to me. I paid little attention to these remarks, trusting in the Scriptures, that "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." I therefore went to board with him, as I had done at the other places. Mrs. C. received me very cordially; but when her husband came in from his work, he seemed much surprised to find me there. He, however, gave me his hand, and seemed greatly agitated; but as I conversed freely with him, he became quite calm. Just as I was retiring to my room Mrs. C. handed me the Bible, saying, "Mrs. Gardner, I suppose you would be pleased to have family worship?" This was a trying moment. I felt that I had a Goliath of the Philistines to contend with, and no resource, but to cry to God for strength adequate to my day. I opened the precious

volume, and read a chapter; after which I fell upon my knees to pour out my soul to God. All the family kneeled with me except Mr. C., who retained his seat. When we rose from our knees, I immediately retired to my room, conscious that I had done my duty, painful as it had proved to me.

I slept but little during the night; I was greatly tempted, and truly felt that it would be agreeable to my feelings not to be called upon again to perform the same duty. But, in spite of my hopes and fears, the Bible was again handed to me on the succeeding morning, and again I read, and kneeled, and prayed. I felt that God was with me, teaching me how to pray, and what to pray for. On my way to my school, the next morning, I met Mrs. B., who asked me where I was then boarding. On being informed, she exclaimed, "Is it possible! Do you know that Mr. C. has threatened to take your life the first time you ever darkened his doors? This I heard him say, and I told him he must be careful what he did to *you*, for you always carried a broadsword by your side ready for use." I smiled, and assured her that God had made even my enemies to be at peace with

me. I continued to board with them, and was treated with every mark of respect and kindness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Feeble health—Loses the sight of her right eye—Leaves Wantage—Its educational and religious improvement—A winter in New York city—Takes charge of a female academy at Springfield—Her health fails—Resigns her school—Engages in teaching at Clinton—Hopeful conversions among the children—Changes her Church relation.

WHEN the autumnal months came on I found my health failing. I had taken a violent cold, which settled upon my lungs, producing a cough, which almost entirely unfitted me for the duties devolving upon me. I, however, continued my school through the winter. In the spring I found myself so miserable, that I was convinced that I must either relax or renounce my labors entirely. Mrs. T. advised me to give up the school I then taught, and take charge of the one near the parsonage, where my duties would be less arduous. Others, too, were anxious that I should do so, and I at last complied with their wishes. I found the Sabbath school here in a flourishing state, many being engaged in in-

structing the children in the principles of our holy religion. I therefore felt constrained to confine my labors to my week-day school.

My health now rapidly declined. One day, having some distance to walk in the hot sun, I sunk under it, and was very sick for some days. At this time I lost the sight of my right eye, and the sight of the other became impaired. I, however, continued my school till October, when my strength entirely failed me, and I was obliged to give it up. After resting for six weeks, I thought I had gained sufficient strength to admit of my going to New York, where I hoped that something might be done for my eyes. My friends, unwilling that I should leave them unless *compelled* to do so, endeavored to persuade me to stay, thinking I might, after a few months, resume my labors. I consulted with a skillful physician, who gave it as his opinion that I was rapidly sinking with the consumption. This convinced me that I could be of no farther benefit to this dear people. The thought of leaving them was truly afflicting to me, especially as they expressed great sympathy and love for me at that time. But I did not leave till I had promised to return to them the

following spring, in case God should spare my life and restore my health. Thus, after a residence of more than seven years at Wantage, I took—as it proved—my final leave of it. During that time the progress of education and the repeated revivals of religion had greatly changed the state of its society. These mountains and valleys had become a fruitful field, and the desert had been made to blossom as a rose. In this highly-favored township there are at present two flourishing boarding-schools, and female schools are very abundant.

After leaving the spot that had become endeared to me by so many fond remembrances, I proceeded on my journey to New York. On my arrival there I was very feeble and much emaciated. My friends were greatly surprised at my altered looks, and seemed to have no hope of my recovery. I did not go out at all during the winter, and when spring returned I found my cough measurably decreased, and my sight improved. This was in the year 1834. In the month of May I was solicited to take charge of the young ladies' department in the academy at Springfield, New Jersey. I readily accepted the call, and commenced my labors; but I soon became too

feeble to go on with them. A tumor in my throat, which had been growing several years, now ulcerated, so that the pain at times was excruciating. I was, consequently, again obliged to relinquish my labors, and go to live with my sister, who resided about two miles from Springfield. I remained with her through the winter, and taught her children. In the month of April, 1835, I commenced teaching at Clinton, about two miles from Springfield; but I was still feeble, and my mind much troubled from the fear that I should be totally blind—a dreadful, and, I may say, truly-painful thought to me at that time. I felt, if my usefulness should cease, my life would indeed be a burden.

I, however, tried to commit all my interests into the hands of God, and devote my remaining energies to his service. My sight gradually failed; but my labors were still blessed, and my school grew every day more interesting. One little girl was soon hopefully converted, and a general seriousness pervaded the school, which has since resulted in the conversion of many. About this time I received an invitation from a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church to attend upon the services held in their church

at Springfield. I was pleased to accept it, and the next Sabbath morning accompanied my friend to the church. The remarks of the pastor were founded upon these words: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." He told the story of the cross in a very touching manner, and I was much encouraged and strengthened. I often attended this Church, and found myself greatly benefited in attending class meetings. I felt that it would be a privilege to be united with this dear people, and I sometimes felt it an imperative duty to identify myself with them. My name was still on the record of the First Presbyterian Church at Wantage, where I had been received by certificate. At first I thought I would send for a letter of dismissal from that Church; but, after mature deliberation, decided to join the Methodist Church on probation. I therefore gave the Church at Wantage notice of my intention, and, without further delay, offered myself as a probationer of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

After taking this step, I felt so free, so peaceful and happy, that I was assured it was pleasing to God. I almost fancied myself a little bird, that had long been imprisoned, and,

being set at liberty, was constantly on the wing. My cup of blessings, which had always been full, now overflowed. I had great light and liberty of mind, and drank copious draughts from the wells of salvation. Though I found much to call forth my gratitude to God among these, the dear people of my choice, yet I was also subject to some disappointments. With them I had hoped to find the enjoyment of the witness of holiness the general experience of the ministry and people; but, to my surprise, found the experimental witnesses of this grace few and far between. It was, indeed, a matter of astonishment to me, that so many were living so far beneath what they knew to be their privilege. Too many not only did not enjoy it, but had confused ideas on the subject. Some believed it was not attainable till a dying hour; others thought it attainable, but that sanctification and justification were both received at the same time; while some seemed sincere in thinking that it could be possessed only by few.

CHAPTER XIX.

Love-feast—Receives the witness of sanctification—Accident—Intense suffering—Completeness in Christ—Becomes totally blind—Prospect of immediate dissolution—Angelic music—Effects of a dream.

I NOW felt more than ever before that my progress must be onward, and my motto, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." I longed to possess fully the mind that was in Christ. At the first love-feast that I attended, I was led to ask for a clear evidence that my Savior had indeed washed all my sins away. I had learned to exercise *present* faith in a *present* Savior. When the water was handed to me I felt to exclaim, "Blessed emblem of God's truth! may my heart be made as pure as this water appears to my natural vision!" My petition seemed to be answered while I was yet speaking, and the Holy Spirit in a very powerful manner bore witness with my spirit that I was cleansed from all unrighteousness. After the love-feast, the sacrament was administered. While partaking of these emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, I was filled with his fullness. This was a Sabbath that I shall never

forget—a sweet foretaste of the Sabbaths that shall never end.

One day, as I was returning from my school, and the ground wet and slippery, in attempting to cross a small ditch, my foot slipped and I fell. My satchel, into which I had dropped a pair of sharp-pointed scissors, was hanging upon my arm. The scissors pierced the palm of my hand, puncturing a nerve, which caused the most excruciating pain. With great difficulty I reached the house. Mrs. B., the lady with whom I was boarding, met me at the door. She saw that I looked very pale, and said, “Are you sick?” I replied, that I had fallen and hurt myself. She was greatly alarmed, and when I explained to her the nature of the wound, did every thing in her power to remove the pain. But her efforts proved unavailing, and, in a few hours, my hand and arm, to my shoulder, were swollen in a very frightful manner. The physician was sent for, but did not arrive till midnight. In the mean time my sufferings became so intense that it seemed evident that I must die. At last Mrs. B. said to me, “Sister Gardner, I am afraid your work is done, as nothing seems to relieve you.” I replied, “Yes, I do not

think I can live an hour." She sat down at the foot of the bed, and wept bitterly. I turned my face to the wall, and, by faith, clung to the cross of the Savior of sinners. This I felt was all I could do. That moment I felt, as it were, the washing of his precious blood, from my head to my feet, accompanied by these words: "Thy salvation is in me complete." My joy was so great that I became insensible to bodily pain, and lay motionless. Mrs. B., who had been watching me, came to my bedside, and, leaning over me, said, "Sister, are you asleep?" This aroused me to my consciousness, and I answered, "No." She then asked, "Has the pain left you?" I replied, "No; but to live is Christ, and to die is gain." At this moment the doctor came in. He examined my hand, and opened the wound, causing it to bleed freely, so that I felt much relieved.

In the morning, when I heard them speak of the rising sun, I opened my eyes, when the dreadful reality flashed upon my mind, that I was totally blind! My feelings were such as I can never describe; but I was enabled at once to say, "Thy will be done." The covenant which I had made upon my husband's

grave, when I asked God to use me in any way that might be for his glory, came fresh to my mind. But, though my faith had been submitted to this painful test, I felt no disposition to remove the sacrifice from the altar which sanctified the gift. I thought, if it should be the will of God, I could, with perfect resignation, lie blind and helpless upon my bed for ten years. "Let me be just what *thou* wouldst have me be, and all is well," was the sincere language of my heart.

For about six weeks I continued very low, and without any expectation of recovery. One day in particular I was unable to speak, and my friends thought I was dying. Rev. Mr. Hanley, and other friends who had come in to witness my departure, sat in silence around the room. I was, however, perfectly conscious, and felt a desire that they should improve the time in singing. I made a motion with my hand. Some one remarked, "She wants water." The water was brought, but I shook my head. With some difficulty they ascertained that I wished them to sing. Mr. Hanley replied, weeping, "Sister, we can not sing, but we will pray." They all kneeled, and he prayed in a most fervent manner.

Spiritual blessings seemed diffused through all the room. When they arose from their knees, their attention was directed to me; observing a change in me, they supposed I was gone. One dear sister raised me up in her arms, and others commenced rubbing my hands and applying restoratives. At the time they kneeled in prayer I had become perfectly unconscious of every thing around me, and my attention seemed to be directed to two angelic forms, who appeared to descend to my bedside to receive my spirit. They were engaged in singing in the most melodious strains that I ever heard. When my friends commenced rubbing me I gasped two or three times, and began to breathe with great difficulty. The pain in my lungs caused by this exertion was extreme; but in a few minutes I was able to breathe quite freely. A feeling of disappointment came over me, when I found that, instead of being carried by angels to my heavenly home, I was still joined to earth. This disturbed me much; and the enemy took great advantage of the trying moment.

My cousin, who had heard that I was dead, came to the house, and on seeing me still living, said to me, "I do not think you will

die yet: you may live many years.” “O, cousin!” I replied, “can it be possible?” I then remembered that Hezekiah had fifteen years added to his life, and judged it not impossible that as much might be added to mine. I was grieved to find my will not entirely lost in the will of God; I prayed for submission, and soon fell asleep. I then dreamed that my daughter Jane came to my bedside, looking very beautiful, when I said, “My daughter, have you come for me?” “No, mother,” she replied, “Jesus says you must stay a little longer. He will be with you all the way, and then take you home to glory.” “But,” said I, “I want to go *now*.” “No, mother,” she replied, “the blessed Savior sent me to tell you that you must stay a little longer; he will *surely* be with you all the way, and then take you home to glory.” I awoke; it was indeed a dream; but such was its effect that I had no desire either to go or stay. With Job I could freely say, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.”

CHAPTER XX.

Convalescence—Becomes an inmate of the New York Eye Infirmary—Various opportunities for usefulness—Conversion of an interesting young man—Longs for the courts of the Lord—Remarkable answer to prayer—Happy death of Mrs. F.—Hope of recovering her sight abandoned.

My convalescence was tedious. I was very feeble all summer, but able occasionally to ride out. When October came, I was again confined to my bed, which I was not able to leave till the following April. At that time I went to my cousin's in my native village. Here I found a gentleman from Brooklyn, whose wife was fast sinking with the consumption, and had resorted thither in hopes that her physical frame might be benefited. I soon became much attached to them, and in compliance with their urgent request made them a visit. While there, a widow lady, by the name of Camp, having heard of my affliction, called upon me in company with her aunt C., who resided in the city of New York. They were total strangers to me, but their feelings soon became enlisted, and they afterward proved themselves among my warmest friends. After visiting me several times, they, with others,

were strongly induced to think that my sight might be again restored. When they mentioned the subject to me, I replied, "I do not think that I shall ever see again." They told me that much had been done for others, and doubtless the same means might accrue to my benefit. At last I yielded to their persuasions, and on the tenth day of September, 1837, Mrs. Camp and another dear friend of mine accompanied me to New York.

Some of the most celebrated oculists in the city were consulted, and gave so much encouragement, that it was decided that I should go to the New York Eye Infirmary. I felt willing to submit to any thing that might be done for the restoration of my sight. These dear friends manifested great tenderness, as they were about to leave me in my helpless condition in the hands of strangers; but I told them to give themselves no uneasiness; that Jesus was with me, and I should be taken care of. Three dollars per week were paid for my board, by my friends in New Jersey, and I was treated with great kindness by the inmates and superintendent of the Infirmary.

I was, however, rather lonely for a time,

not having any intercourse with the dear people of my choice. But the mother-in-law of the superintendent was a devotedly-pious woman, and soon became my constant companion.

In a few weeks a young lady, who was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, came into the family to sew. After some conversation with me, she asked me if I would not like to go to Church. I assured her that I wished much to be once more favored with this delightful privilege, as it had been more than two years since I had attended Church. The next Sabbath she took me to the Duane-street Church. The text preached from was, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The sermon was made a great blessing to me, and I felt that I had been strengthened "with might by the Spirit in the inner man."

During the intermission I was led to the house of a brother, where there was a prayer meeting. Here I was introduced to several of the Methodist brethren. My case was made known to brother Ferguson, and I had soon a number of God's dear children to visit me, and contribute to my necessities, among whom were Bishop Janes and sister Lankford.

In the Infirmary were persons of every grade and character; and I soon found that God had brought me into a vast field for usefulness. I loved much to visit those who were sick, and by kind words comfort any who were distressed. It was not unfrequently the case, that disputes and difficulties arose between the different inmates, and God often permitted me to be a peace-maker with them. I speak not this to extol myself, but to the praise of my heavenly Father, who did not, in these dark days, withhold from me the "luxury of doing good," but who did indeed work in me "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." In a worldly point of view my prospect was exceedingly dreary, and, without the comforts of religion, I would have been completely carried away with my own troubles; but my condescending Savior beheld me in my low estate, and helped me to endure, as seeing Him who is invisible—permitted me to discover, by the eye of faith, my mansion in heaven, and a crown of glory in reserve for me, to which I was well convinced the sufferings of this present moment were not worthy to be compared. This excited me to double my diligence, and, in the language of Paul, I was

enabled to say, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities," for "when I am weak, then am I strong."

About this time a very interesting young man came to the Infirmary, who had lost the use of his eyes by too great application to study. I felt deeply interested for him, and finding that he was not a Christian, became very anxious that he should seek the salvation of his soul. In unison with the prayers of Mr. B., an elderly gentleman who was there for a few weeks, my prayers daily and almost hourly ascended to heaven for mercy upon this perishing soul. We had conversed with each other respecting this young man, and covenanted to pray for him, pleading the promise, "If two of you agree on earth as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them." I now endeavored to urge upon Mr. R.'s mind the importance of going himself to God, and seeking salvation through the merits of the blessed Redeemer. He acknowledged himself a sinner, but said, "If I allow myself to think of this subject now, my mind will become agitated, and thus the means used for the restoration of my sight will be counteracted, and I shall never be able

to see again." I had a very different view of the subject, and still urged upon him the necessity of securing at once the salvation of his soul. One day, while I was conversing with him upon the subject, he suddenly arose and said, "Well, Mrs. Gardner, eyes or no eyes, I *will* seek the salvation of my soul." He went to his room and locked his door to pray in secret. I was led to pray for him in a very fervent manner. For several days he could neither eat nor sleep.

Early one morning he came to me with a very happy countenance, and said, "Mrs. Gardner, God has forgiven all my sins." In this delightful frame of mind, he went through the house, exhorting all he met to give their hearts to God, and seek him while he might be found. From this time his eyes rapidly improved, so that physicians considered it a very remarkable case, and in a little time his sight was perfectly restored. When he entered the Infirmary he intended to have studied law as a profession, but he now felt that he must devote his talents exclusively to the work of the ministry.

Matilda S., the young lady who had led me to Church, was now confined at home with a

sick sister. I had, therefore, been deprived of this means of grace for some time. The week previous to the communion service I had felt a strong desire to commemorate the dying love of my Savior. I made it a subject of prayer, that God would send me some one to take me to Church. My confidence that he would answer my prayer was such, that when Sunday morning came I dressed myself for Church; and when the bells commenced ringing, I put on my hat, and took my seat in the hall, waiting for the expected answer. Mrs. V. passed through the hall, and when she saw me with my bonnet on said, "Mrs. Gardner, where are you going?" "To Church," I replied. "But who," said she, "is going with you?" "I do not know," I replied, "but the Lord will surely provide." This she much doubted; but, as we were conversing upon the subject, the door-bell rang, and I heard a person ask for me. I was pointed out to her, when she stepped forward and introduced herself as Miss O. She proceeded to say that she was in the city on a visit, and had felt that morning a great desire to be useful, as she expected to return home the next day. She had asked God to direct her to some place

where she might be useful, and, while praying about it, it had been suggested to her mind that she might do good by leading Mrs. Gardner to Church, of whom she had heard through her friends. She had, therefore, come to offer her assistance. I accepted the offer with gratitude, and thanked God for his condescension in listening to my petitions, and permitting me once more to kneel at his table. On my return Mrs. V. met me, and said, "Mrs. Gardner, I don't understand this; you are one of the *queerest folks* I ever saw." I don't comprehend this religion." I replied, "This is the power of faith, which every believer possesses, to a greater or less extent."

Shortly after this Mrs. V.'s mother was taken sick. Her advanced age rendered it highly improbable that she would ever recover. But she was triumphantly happy. For three weeks before her death not a cloud intervened between herself and her Savior. I was with her most of the time, and her last prayer was in my behalf, and her last words were, "I am going to die—lay me down on the bosom of my Savior." She then clasped her hands, and said, "Farewell! I am just in my Father's house." She breathed a few times, and then

sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. My dear companion was taken, and I left to be still further refined.

CHAPTER XXI.

Severe trials—Encouraged by a dream—Leaves the Eye Infirmary—Adversity—Taken to the county poor-house—Soliloquy in verse—Dreams of angelic visitants—Useful visits—Mr. G. interests himself in her behalf—Visit to Mr. D.—Leaves the poor-house.

EVERY means which human skill could devise had been made use of, by my physician, for the restoration of my sight; but medicines and surgical operations proved alike unavailing. The time drew near when I must leave this place. This was, indeed, man's extremity. I was blind, and hopelessly so; I was also poor, and very poor; and when I left this institution I knew not where I should lay my head. My faith was sorely tried. I might fall into the hands of the wicked, who would not be willing to read the Bible to me, or take me to Church. But in this time of trouble I turned to my stronghold for refuge. I poured my sorrows into the ears of my heavenly Father, knowing that he was ever ready to hear my cry.

One evening, when I had been especially pleading my case before the throne, I fell asleep. I dreamed that I rose from my bed and fell upon my knees, beseeching my heavenly Father not to let me fall into the hands of the wicked, saying, "My Father, wilt thou condescend to thy poor dust, and give me a sign of thy protection?" While praying, I thought that such a blessing was poured out upon me, that I exclaimed, "Lord, it is enough; I am confident that thou wilt never leave me." I was just rising from my kneeling posture, when I discovered two white doves, standing at my right side. I thought that sister S. was in bed, and I spoke to her, saying, "O, sister, the Lord has answered my prayer twice. He gave me the assurance, while praying, that I should never be deserted by Christians, and here is the sign." At that moment one of the doves flew into my lap, and the other upon my shoulder, and rubbed its little head against my face in a very loving manner. "This bird," I exclaimed, "is my dear Savior, whose love for me surpasses knowledge; and this dove in my lap is the Church, the Lord's bride, who will administer to my necessities." I awoke much comforted

by my dream. All anxiety was taken from my mind, and I felt sweetly to rest on the bosom of the Almighty, and to praise God for his goodness in thus manifesting himself to me.

Since my blindness I have often been comforted in a similar manner. The avenues through which I formerly received the precious promises, thence deriving consolation, in times of trouble, are forever closed. But God, who is indeed "a very present help in time of trouble," now opened other avenues for himself. I am convinced that he never does any thing needlessly, and this is the reason why I never had these manifestations previous to my affliction; since which, how often have I derived abundant consolations from dreams and visions of the night! "Bless, bless the Lord, O, my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

The time had now come for me to leave the Infirmary. I took an affectionate leave of its inmates. Thoughts both painful and pleasing crowded upon my mind, as I bade farewell to this building, which had been my home for seventeen months. My sister, and her husband, who have since died, had removed to the far west three years previous to this.

Many of the friends whom God had raised up for me found insurmountable obstacles in the way of my going into their families; while others, who had surrounded me in my former days, forsook me in my deepest distress. I was, therefore, taken to the township of Clinton, in the state of New Jersey, and left at the poor-house in the little village of Middleville.

I now found myself associated with the dregs of society; but the thought that my blessed Savior, the Lord of glory, was numbered with transgressors, and had not where to lay his head, led me to feel that I was privileged even, in being like my blessed Master. In this respect I could, indeed, say, that I had a merciful and faithful high priest, who had been tempted in all points as I was, and who was afflicted in all my afflictions, with a sweet assurance that he would, in that great and last day, number me among those who shall come up through great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

I was led at this time to soliloquize in the following manner:

“This body, and these feeble limbs of mine,
Once scarcely felt the ravages of time;

These eyes once beamed with rapture and delight,
To see the morning sun's resplendent light.

Sorrow and sickness, sore disease and pain,
Have thrown their deadly poison through each vein;
These eyes, now sightless, look in vain for light;
All, all is changed to one continual night.

Husband and children, parents, friends are gone,
And I am left to grope my way alone;
Foxes have holes—birds of the air have nests—
No home have I, where my poor head may rest.

But faith looks up, within the veil to see
The throne of grace, by Jesus' death made free;
Where all may come, and pour their fervent prayers
To Him whose smiles can dry the mourner's tears.

Yes, Jesus reigns, enthroned in glorious light;
His radiant beams dispel the shades of night;
He soothes my sorrows, bids the tempest cease,
Forgives my sins, and sweetly whispers peace.

No more with worms I'll grovel here below;
My Savior calls, and cheerfully I'll go;
Though storms may howl, and raging billows roll;
Though friends all fail, and foes assault my soul.

Sustained by grace, I'll calmly speed my way
Till death's cold hand shall seize this mortal clay;
Then may my soul, with shouts of triumph, rise,
And join the blood-washed throng in yonder skies."

I now earnestly prayed that the cause of religion might not be injured by its friends, and that this, my deepest humiliation, might be for the honor and glory of God.

This was in 1839, and, as there was every appearance that this would be my permanent

home, I had my name transferred from the records of the Church in Springfield to those of Middleville. I soon became deeply interested in the Church established here, and desired to be useful, but knew not how to do it, as all the means for usefulness seemed to be taken out of my hands. At the same time my mind was much drawn out in prayer, that I might be shown some way in which I might work for God. One night, as I was reflecting upon these things, I fell asleep, and dreamed that I saw two angelic forms enter my window and come to my bedside. There was a sweet smile on their faces, and, as I looked at them, I said, "Have you come for me?" They replied, "No; we have a message from God, to tell you what you are to do." I was delighted to hear the nature of their visit, and eagerly inquired what was their message. They then named two or three families in the village, saying that I ought to visit them and urge upon them the necessity of being more actively engaged in the service of the Lord. I replied, that I could not go without being led. They answered, "A child can lead you." "But," I continued, "perhaps they will not receive me." They then said, "The Lord

will go with you." I then replied, "It is enough; I will go."

When I awoke I felt that I must visit those families. I requested a mother to let her little child lead me; she consented, and I went. I found my poor body very feeble; I could just walk along, and that was all. But the thought that God was with me quite sustained me. I met with a very welcome reception, and found my visit very profitable. A few nights after I had another similar dream. I thought that the angels again presented themselves, when I asked, "What shall I do now?" They answered, "You must pray for this Church; if it is ever saved, it will be in answer to prayer." I awoke just as the clock was striking two. I arose and kneeled in prayer, greatly burdened for the sanctification of believers and conversion of sinners.

One day, while visiting a sick and dying woman, where it was necessary to have the windows and doors open to admit air, I took a violent cold, which confined me to my bed three weeks, when I again drew near the gates of death. During my convalescence Mr. S. H. Gardner, the overseer of the poor, came to visit us, and though a stranger to me, was

deeply affected to see me in my affliction, and gave me an invitation to visit his family. As he was leaving the house he was heard to say, "It is rather a hard case that Mrs. Gardner should be obliged to live in this way; she ought to be supported by her friends."

When I had recovered my strength sufficiently to ride out, I was invited to visit a friend in Clinton. I was very kindly received here, and spent some weeks. Mrs. Gardner, hearing I was in the neighborhood, sent me an invitation to come and make them a long visit. Friends were now raised up on every side, and I soon found that the poor-house was no longer to be my home.

CHAPTER XXII.

Pleasant change of circumstances—Kindness of Mrs. B.—Threatened with immediate dissolution—Instructive dreams—The race—The crown—The day of judgment.

I now became an itinerant; at the kind solicitation of my friends, I went from house to house, from village to village. I was kindly welcomed and entertained wherever I went. Each family that I visited most cheerfully administered to my wants; while I rendered to

them my only compensation—the fervent prayer, that “inasmuch as they had done it to one of the least of his disciples, they might be rewarded as having done it for Christ alone.” How truly could I now say, “The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing!”

My dear and well-tried friend, Mrs. C., now became the wife of Mr. B., and I was invited to take up my abode with them. It would be difficult to give an adequate idea of the kindness which they manifested toward me; every thing that could be done, was done to promote my comfort and augment my happiness. This was my *home*, to which I could always resort, after an absence on visits to other kind friends. I was very sick at their house several times, when my increased wants seemed to be supplied in a still more affectionate manner. In the year 1843 I had a violent attack of inflammation of the bowels, and for several days suffered greatly. The remedies applied seemed ineffective, and I found no relief.

Sister B. seemed much distressed by my situation, and fervently prayed that God would mitigate my sufferings, and grant speedy re-

lief. One morning I awoke entirely free from pain, with a deathlike coldness throughout my whole body. Sister B. was greatly alarmed, thinking that mortification had taken place. The physician was immediately called, who said that I might possibly recover, but it was exceedingly doubtful.

My mind was now quiet and undisturbed. I was perfectly unconscious of any thing passing, and lay much like one in a sleep. It seemed to me that I had been placed by an invisible arm of strength in a narrow road, on each side of which was a thick hedge. I was told to run. I endeavored to do so, but found it difficult. Sometimes I would take hold of the hedge on one side, and then on the other. Whenever I did this, I found myself suddenly drawn out of my course, and just ready to fall. I then seemed to be directed by the being that had placed me there not to take *hold* of any thing, but fold my hands and look straight before me. I had great difficulty in doing this, but, after strenuous effort, succeeded. I was now able to go with less difficulty, and was soon able to run very fast. The farther I advanced, the faster could I run, and with greater ease. I discovered that

the road was thronged with people, and, what seemed very strange to me, I found myself outstripping many who were in the road before me. I saw many persons on each side, who had fallen while trying to take hold of the hedge: but none had fallen in the road. I soon found myself running so fast that my feet did not seem to touch the ground. I could hear those behind me uttering the ejaculatory complaints, "I can't get along," "I am sure I shall fall." Some would call out to me, and say, "How do you get along?" "How fast you go!" The invisible being then said, "This is the Christian race; you must keep your eye fixed on the end of the road, where you will see Jesus." Just then sister B., who was behind me, said, "Sister, can't you assist me? I can't get along." "Place yourself in the same position that I am in," said I, "and you will get along with less difficulty." The farther I advanced, the more rapid was my flight, and I earnestly called on those behind me to speed on their way, as I could now see the end of the race. Just at this time I distinctly saw another form; as I advanced toward it I discovered that it was an angelic form, clothed in white: around his

head was a glittering circle, like the sun in its brightness. This, thought I, is the Savior. He is the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. His hands were extended toward me, and in each hand he held a radiant crown. As I came nearer he sweetly smiled, and said, "Run—the crowns are all ready!"

Mrs. B. now came to me, and raising my head from the pillow, said, "Dear sister, let me give you a little wine and water; I think it will not be long before you drink it new in your Father's kingdom." "I think so too, dear sister," I replied; "but I am sorry you have disturbed me: I was running a race, and had almost reached the end of it, and you were just behind me."

Not long after this, on falling asleep, I thought that the resurrection morn had come. The judgment was set, and the books were opened. I then saw a numerous company assembled at the right hand of the judgment-seat. Nearest the Judge was a large company of infants, and next to them a vast number of older children; and beyond them I discovered a vast multitude, such as no man could number, of every nation and kindred, and all

classes, from the king to the beggar. There was an awful silence there, and I thought, "What means this silence?" I then heard a voice saying, "Have you never read in Revelation, 'There was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour?'" "O, yes!" I replied. The Judge now proceeded to examine each case separately, strictly interrogating them as to the manner in which they had lived in their respective spheres of life. All seemed to be judged by their talents and opportunities of doing good. All seemed to be upon a common level. As I saw one after another receive their sentence, I thought, "How shall I bear the test?" I then heard a voice say, "You now see that the righteous are *scarcely* saved." Among this vast multitude I saw many of my friends who are still living. It seemed to me that Mrs. B. and my cousin E. were there. My cousin was looking with great earnestness toward the group of children, to see if she could discover her little babe, that had died some time before. She then turned to me, and said, "Mary, what will they do with our children?" I replied, "Those who have not arrived at the state of accountability will be saved by the blood of Jesus."

After all the righteous had been examined, the vast multitude on the left hand appeared in sight. I also saw in this number some whom I had little expectation of seeing there; one in particular, whom I had thought an exemplary Christian. I asked why *he* was on the left hand, when a voice answered, "He has depended upon his morality and good works, instead of the blood of Christ." As soon as his examination was over, he broke out in the most profane expressions against God and his righteous will. I was horror-struck with the howls and blasphemy of the damned, which I then heard. It was dreadful beyond description. I exclaimed, "Why is all this?" The voice replied, "Restraining grace is now taken away, and you now see man acting out his fallen nature." When their examination was over they separated into three divisions, and passed from our view. I distinctly heard their wailings as they gradually died away in the distance. Of all I had ever pictured to myself of the misery of the finally lost, nothing could be compared to this. My physician now aroused me from my slumbers. I tried to tell him what I had just witnessed, but was unable. My whole physical powers were

prostrated. This, too, was a dream: but while memory holds its throne, it will never be obliterated from my mind.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mrs. C.'s discouragements—Personal holiness a prerequisite to usefulness—Earnest wrestlings—Joyful confidence—Mrs. C. receives the blessing of sanctification—Prayer answered in an outpouring of the Holy Spirit—Spends the winter with Rev. Mr. V.—Infidelity—Lamentation in verse.

FROM this time I began to recover, and in a few weeks was able to leave my room. In the month of September Mrs. C., from Unionville, came for me to pay them a visit. They lived in a delightful little village; but there were few pious persons in the place. Soon after I arrived Mrs. C. complained to me of her lonely situation, informing me that she was the only Methodist in the place. I urged her to *pray* for the conversion of her neighbors, reminding her that God was a prayer-answering God. In such a course she had little or no faith, as nearly all her neighbors were Universalists. I, however, still urged her to pray for them, assuring her that nothing was *too hard for the Lord*. I also urged upon

her the necessity of living a holy life. She confessed that her mind had been greatly exercised on the subject, and her impressions had been deepened by reading the life of "Hester Ann Rogers." On the first Sabbath after my coming to this place, I went with Mr. and Mrs. C. to the Methodist Church, a mile and a half distant. In the evening I found myself so much fatigued that I concluded to remain at home alone. I did so, and found my heart drawn out in prayer in a very peculiar manner, for the family and neighborhood. I was enabled to lay hold of the promises of God by faith, and was especially led to plead the promise, "When they cry unto me with all their hearts, I will hear them;" and, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name I will do it." A wrestling spirit of prayer was breathed upon me, and I besieged the throne of grace in behalf of this people. It seemed to me that I was talking with God face to face. The burden of my prayer was, that this people should speedily be converted to God. I was filled with the Divine presence, and received the full assurance that my prayer would be answered. I seemed to be filled with the fullness of God.

I retired in this state of mind, and when I rose in the morning I had a full conviction that God was about to raise up a people for himself in this place. I then besought Mrs. C. to give herself no rest till she had obtained the blessing of sanctification, and gave her such instructions as I was able to give in regard to the mode of obtaining it. On the next Tuesday evening I went, in company with Mr. and Mrs. C., to attend a meeting at the Middleville Church. After the sermon there was an invitation given, to those seeking the forgiveness of their sins, to come forward to the altar. Mrs. C. arose, and expressed herself as exceedingly anxious to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. "At this altar," said she, "God pardoned my sins; and at this altar I desire to be sanctified throughout soul, body, and spirit. For this I solicit your prayers, and for my unconverted husband." She then kneeled at the altar, and had no sooner done so, than she was powerfully blessed. She arose and said, "God has taken away all my sins, and filled me with all his fullness." She now found her faith much strengthened in praying for her husband and neighbors, and believed that they would soon

be gathered into the fold of Christ. The next morning I returned to brother Baldwin's. After giving them an account of my visit, I desired them to pray much for that people, saying that I believed the Lord had commenced a good work among them. Brother Baldwin said he had very little hope of their conversion, as they were mostly Universalists.

But, in opposition to all hope, God heard and answered prayer, and, in less than three months, there was an interesting class formed of heads of families, who met at Mrs. Carpenter's house, her husband being one of the number, and Mr. Baldwin became their leader. I have often availed myself of the privilege of attending these meetings, and received some very powerful manifestations of the love of God. May the great Head of the Church and Bishop of souls preside over them, sanctify them wholly, and keep them faithful to the end!

The following winter, Rev. Mr. Vancleave being the preacher in charge over the Springfield and Middleville Churches, I was invited to spend the winter in his family. Soon after going there I took a violent cold, which affected the tumor in my side so as to cause an

abscess, with which I am afflicted to this day, and which will probably accompany me to the grave. My winter home, however, proved a very delightful one, and I received every attention which I could desire. While here I was afflicted by hearing of the low state of religion at Middleville. Infidelity had exerted its withering influence among the inhabitants, and the adversary of souls seemed to reign unmolested. I spent many sleepless nights in wrestling with God for the utter subversion of the kingdom of darkness in this place. I also heard that Thomas Paine's birthday had been celebrated by a large number of persons, who had assembled there for the purpose. This afflicted me much, and I was led to cry,

Great God! look down with pitying eye
On this dear branch of thine,
Which thine own hand hath planted here
In this unfriendly clime.

Oft have these mourning children met,
And poured out sighs and tears
Before the common mercy-seat,
Where Jesus answers prayers.

But still, they no relief can find
From their distressing fears:
Thine enemies march through the land,
And smile to see their tears.

They bid defiance to our King,
 And contradict his word;
 They scorn to hear the Savior's name,
 And trample on his word.

Lord, why is this? we trembling cry,
 Wilt thou not hear our moan?
 Say, shall this branch, that withered lies,
 Again revive and bloom?

Lord, thou canst tell—the work is thine;
 The help of man is vain:
 On this dear branch arise and shine,
 And it shall live again.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Visit to Unionville—Visits the classes by request of Rev. Mr. V.—Devoted ministers—Protracted meeting—Dangerous illness from the effects of a fall—Significant dream—Prayer answered in her recovery—Church at Clinton.

WHEN the spring opened, brother V., in whose family I had spent the winter, was removed by conference to another place. I now visited Unionville, and was much gratified to find the class here established in a highly-prosperous condition. I remained with them a few weeks, visiting the different members of the class, and pressing upon them the necessity of living a life of holiness. On my return to brother Baldwin's I was rejoiced to find that conference had supplied the place of Mr.

THE USEFUL DISCIPLE,

by sending two ministers instead of one. Middleville, where the infection of infidelity had been spreading its baneful influence, was now favored with the undivided and unremitting pastoral labors of Mr. C. God had indeed answered prayer, and sent to the Church in Springfield a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost. The sadness of my heart was now changed to joy, and I felt renewed courage in praying for the salvation of this people.

During the succeeding autumnal months I was solicited to visit Springfield. From the time that I first united with the Church I had endeavored, by a godly life and conversation, to assure others that I desired only to be a Bible Christian; but upon Mr. V. requesting me to visit the different classes, and press upon them the subject of holiness, I felt an almost consuming zeal in the cause, and was led to express myself on this point far more freely and clearly than ever before. I did not seem permitted to speak of my Savior, except as a *perfect* Savior, and one able to save from all sin.

My labors were owned and blessed: in one class several covenanted together to seek, till they found, the blessing of entire sanctification.

In a few days sister S. and a young man, who is now a Methodist preacher in Michigan, found the invaluable pearl of perfect love.

In the spring of 1845 the preacher stationed at Middleville was directed to preach at Clinton, a small village one mile below. He possessed both the spirit and power of the Gospel. By precept and example he labored unremittingly to present to God a holy Church, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." In order to promote a cause so dear to his heart, he circulated such books among the people as would tend to elucidate the subject of holiness. While on a visit to Springfield, this brother came for me, to assist in a protracted meeting at Middleville, which had just commenced. The preachers from Churches in adjacent towns also came to his help, and their labors were very eminently successful: many precious souls were translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

One morning in December, as I was descending the stairway, my foot slipped, and I fell to the bottom. I knew that I was falling, but all was calm within. I did indeed expect to be killed, but felt entire resignation, knowing

that I was going to my dear home in glory. When I reached the bottom I was astonished that not a bone was broken. But my system was a great deal affected by the jar. Soon after I went to Springfield, where I was attacked with a violent hemorrhage, which brought my life once more into imminent danger. During this sickness I one day dreamed that I was walking in Clinton, and as I was passing a blacksmith shop I looked in, and saw on the forge a large quantity of coal. At the side was a huge pair of bellows, which were new, and a man—whom I recognized as brother D.—and several boys, who were endeavoring in vain to make the bellows work. I cast my eyes at the coal, and discovered a single spark, just sufficient to show that it was not entirely extinguished. As I looked at them in their unavailing efforts to bring the bellows down, I said, “You do not work it right: I think I could do it without your help.” They smiled at the idea; but I walked in, took hold of the pole attached to the bellows, and cried out, as I pulled it down, “Lord God Almighty, help!” The difficulty gave way, and as I continued to cry, “Lord, help!” the coal was soon all in a flame. When

they saw this they immediately began their work, putting long pieces of iron in the fire, which they drew out red hot, and put on the anvil. They then commenced hammering, when the sparks flew in all directions, and they were able to proceed with their work without difficulty.

On awaking from this sleep I found a Christian friend standing by my bed, to whom I immediately related my dream. When I had finished, he said, "Let us pray." He then kneeled, and prayed in a very fervent manner for my recovery. He had great liberty in prayer, and when he rose from his knees, he said, "Sister, you will recover; your work is not yet done; your Father will not call you home yet." I replied, "The will of the Lord be done!" From this period the hemorrhage ceased, and I rapidly gained strength. I was soon able to make a visit to Clinton. On my arrival there I was informed that the Episcopal church edifice was for sale. I at once thought that the Methodists ought to have it, and felt an intense desire that they would make the purchase. But how could it be? There were but fifteen members of the Methodist Church, and these worshiped at Middle-

ville. I even made it a subject of prayer, and requested others to join me. There were but three of us who had any faith in praying for it. But we had the promise, "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them." This greatly encouraged us, and we presented our requests at the throne of grace, with an unwavering confidence that the Lord would take it into his own hands.

The conference was now in session in Newark. Bishop Janes was informed of our situation, and, on making further inquiries, became deeply interested in our behalf. We found that the Universalists were making an effort to secure the building, and knew that it could not prove otherwise than a curse if they succeeded. At length the presiding elder was appointed to attend to the purchase. This greatly encouraged the members, and they now not only prayed, but labored in earnest to secure the church. My dream now seemed partially fulfilled. The brother whom I saw in the blacksmith shop was the foremost in this work. Prayer was evidently answered, not only by our success in getting the church, but in having people sent in among us who

were disposed to support it. With this dear people my name now stands, and though we are surrounded by opposing influences, our trust is in the name of the Lord, and we are expecting to see this place, which has been led captive by Satan at his will, rescued by the power of the mighty God.



CHAPTER XXV.

Conclusion—Apologetic—Address to Christians—To parents—To infidels—To the afflicted—To the sinner.

THUS, my dear reader, I have given you a brief sketch of my life to the present period. This I had often been solicited to do previous to my loss of sight, but numerous duties as a teacher, together with some reluctance on my part, prevented me from acquiescing in the wishes of my kind friends. Since my blindness I have been utterly incapacitated to the undertaking, although it has still been a desideratum, on the part of many whom I love, that the dealings of God with me should be brought before the public. Some have long and earnestly prayed, that God would raise up some one to do this work for me. During

the last winter, while confined to the house by illness, a very dear friend called often to see me, and kindly offered, while subjecting herself to great inconvenience, to note down from my lips such events of my life as might seem instructive to others, and conducive to the encouragement of those who are striving through great tribulation to walk in the narrow way. That God may be glorified in the publication of this narrative, is my fervent prayer. For his glory alone I live. In the checkered scenes through which I have passed, I have ever found him "kind and gracious," a very present help in time of trouble. I have had no sorrow that his own soft hand did not in due time alleviate; and though I have never had it to say that any chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, yet I have *always* been enabled to feel that "it is good for me that I have been afflicted." With a full heart I am therefore able to sing,

"'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,
Whose spirit shall guide me safe home;
I'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come."

In taking this retrospect of my life, I am burdened with an unutterable desire that all

should come to the blessed Savior, and find joys such as earth can not give, or even take away. Let little children here be warned of the sad consequences of telling falsehoods. One transgression of this nature imbittered many years of my life. After yielding to this temptation I was afraid of God, and could no longer call him "Abba, Father," in childlike confidence. This was my first downward step. If it had not been taken, I might have never been called to pass through such deep waters.

To parents I would say, be instructed, from my experience, not to discourage your children from seeking religion in the days of their youth. The rich promise to you, and to your children, is, "Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely."

To the infidel I would say, beware how you presume on the goodness of God, and trifle with your dearest interests—the interests of that spirit which is as deathless as the great Being who gave it! You can not tread the beaten path to eternal woe alone. The man who resolves on perdition, carries with him the atmosphere and influence of perdition; nor can he divest himself of this influence.

Others will follow in your own steps, adhere to your teachings, till, coming hand in hand with you to the shades of eternal despair,

“ At last

They sink to everlasting ruin!”

The reader will remember Mr. Wade, who proved so successful in drawing my mind away from the truths of the Bible; and I will here give a brief sketch of his state a few months previous to his death, which I hope may serve as a warning to the skeptic, and induce him to relinquish his unbelief, and seek the Lord while he may be found.

Several months previous to his death, he was seized with an excruciating pain in his cheeks. Supposing it proceeded from decayed teeth, he had some of them extracted, but found no relief. A number of physicians were called in council, but none of them seemed to understand his case. His sufferings became more and more intense; and, without grace to support him, he became like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. At times he would rave like a madman, and give vent to such dreadful blasphemy against the Hand that afflicted him, as to cause those around him to shudder and shrink from his presence.

After a few days the violence of the pain subsided; but his face continued to swell till at last it lost all feeling. He then went, in company with his family physician, to New York, to consult with the principal surgeon in the hospital.

As he was returning home, he called at my father's house to see us. The change in his countenance and manner I shall never forget. "Well, Mr. Wade," said I, "what did the doctor say to you?" "Do you ask me what he said?" answered he. "Why, he told me I must die. He said I might live six months, and I might not live three. He said it was a disease that not more than one in ten thousand are affected with—that my face and mouth will continue to swell till the passage in the throat is entirely closed up, and then I must starve to death!" Horror extreme was depicted in his countenance while he spoke, and he abruptly rose and left the house. These predictions proved too true.

For some time after he was able to walk out; but his disease gradually gained ground, till he was confined to his room. He had, up to this time, continued to cherish his former infidel views; he, however, gradually gave

way, and his anguish of soul became so great that he could no longer conceal it. I visited him daily during his illness. One morning, as I approached his house, I could distinctly hear the voice of prayer. When it ceased I entered, and found him seated at his table, around which his family were seated at breakfast. He had been asking the blessing of God upon the food before them. As I addressed him he rose from the table, and advancing toward me took my hand, and said, "I am the most miserable man on earth, and, what is worse, there is no mercy for me!" He then walked to the looking-glass, on the opposite side of the room, pulled the muffles from his face, and, surveying himself in the glass, exclaimed, "Well *might* the doctor say not one in ten thousand is afflicted with this disease! Not one in ten thousand have sinned like me. Well *may* this mouth be smitten—this mouth which has uttered so many curses!" I endeavored to present to him the truths of the Gospel, and the hope of pardon while believing in Jesus. He suddenly turned toward me, and, taking my hand, fixed his eyes upon me, and said, "Do you think God can be *just*, and pardon me too—one who has

been the means of leading so many immortal souls into this damnable error?" I replied, "God *can* be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. The *vilest* may come to this all-sufficient Savior, and he will wash their sins away. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "I have no doubt," he continued, "that there are souls now in hell that I have been the means of sending there. Ah! and I tried to destroy *your* soul too! But you escaped my snare, and are at this moment more precious to me than gold!" My efforts to point him to his only remedy seemed unavailing: he refused to look and be saved. Some days subsequent to this, as I entered his room at evening, his countenance looked more placid; he said to me, "Well, Mary, I have done a great work to-day. I have burned all my infidel books, determined not to leave one of them behind to poison others. I am glad I have lived to do this."

He sent for his former associates, to warn them against cherishing the views which he had endeavored to persuade them were true. He likewise sent for Mr. Thompson and other Christians, to talk with and pray for him. A

weekly prayer meeting was held in his room, and he gave many evidences of hatred for sin, and desired only the society of Christians. He requested Mr. Thompson to make use of his name, whenever he thought proper, to warn sinners by his example. In a short time he was called into the presence of the Judge of all the earth, where, if filthy, we must be filthy still, and if holy, we shall be holy still.

To the sons and daughters of affliction I would say, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Love God with all the heart, and the words, "I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," will then be sweet to your soul. The judgments of God you will then esteem "true and righteous altogether," and your path will grow brighter and brighter, till it is lost in one eternal day.

To Christians in every sphere I would say, press on—crowns appear in view, and mansions in heaven are your everlasting habitations. "Your fathers, where are they?" The apostles, where are they? O, where, but in His presence, where is fullness of joy, and at His right hand, where are pleasures for ever-

more! Well may I say, press on! and consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

Sinners, repent, that your sins may be blotted out, before that great and notable day of the Lord shall come. Fly *now* to the ark of safety, lest you should then be constrained to call in vain to rocks and mountains, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!”

THE END.

2/11/19

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